THE

FASHIONABLE FRIEND:

A

NOVEL.

DUBLIN:

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and C. Jenkin.

M,DCC,LXXIV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE FASHIONABLE FRIEND.

LETTER I.

To Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LIFE is a fatiguing journey. I am already tired of it. Without the company of my loved Lord, I am miſerable even in this paradiſe. No friend! no acquaintance! how dull and tedious appear the weary hours! Four years have I been married to colonel Beaufort; but never yet been acknowledged for his wife. Without fortune, or family, his haughty father would ſpurn me from him, and reduce his now tenderly beloved ſon to that beggary for which he would deſpiſe your friend.

Poverty, though a real, and often an unavoidable misfortune, is likewiſe in the eye of many an unpardonable fault. It was not ſo with my generous Beaufort. Chance threw him in my way, when fortune had reduced me and my venerable mother to the loweſt extremity of wretchedneſs — when an unfeeling creditor was depriving us of our little all, and another threatening my weeping widowed parent with a jail — he entered our apartment by miſtake, inſtead of that of a friend, who lodged in the ſame houſe. Our tears caught his attention, whilſt our diſtreſs found an eaſy paſſage to his benevolent heart. He became a friend, and ſoon the lover of your Henrietta. He found me ſurrounded with miſery; but not an object for ſeduction. The few charms I poſſeſſed conquered the only heart in which I ever wiſhed to find a place. A private marriage was propoſed, and ſoon agreed to. My mother, and an old friend of my father's, were the only witneſſes to our union — you, and Sir Henry Courtney, the only friends intruſted with our ſecret. Soon after our marriage he purchaſed this retreat for

for me; pleaſed with the romantic ſituation, and its diſtance from the metropolis, which ſerved to conceal our marriage; and notwithſtanding its diſtance, till within theſe laſt ſeven months, I have ſeen the dear owner of it very frequently. I, at his requeſt, took the name of Melville, and he always viſits me as the relation of an abſent huſband; but the eyes of envy, and the tongue of ſlander are not eaſily ſatisfied. I am regarded as the kept miſtreſs of ſome man of faſhion; and my ſweet, innocent Jeſſa as the offspring of lawleſs love. My own ſex refuſe to viſit me, whilſt they gladly take every opportunity of inſulting what they pretend to deſpiſe. The other ſex think the freedom of my conduct a licence for the freedoms they too often preſume to take with me, when neceſſity drives me from my aſylum.

The friendly viſit you made, after my dear mother had ſunk to everlaſting peace, greatly helped to alleviate my anguiſh: but your abſence, my dear Caroline, makes my ſolitude the more irkſome. Did your parents know that I am branded with the tale of infamy, never would they permit you

to return.—To increaſe my ſorrow, I every day expect to hear that my huſband is ordered abroad: he has long expected it; but cruelly refuſes to let me accompany him.

May heaven ever preſerve my gentle Caroline from experiencing the numberleſs woes which ſeem to hang threatening o'er her friend,

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER II.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

BE comforted, my Henrietta. What are the inſults of a misjudging world, to a heart that has ever been the votary of virtue? The hour you dread may be far diſtant. Something may happen to prevent its ever arriving: therefore, don't anticipate misfortune.

Permit me to make my father and mother the confidants of your ſecret: it will purchaſe liberty to attend my friend. I will not deceive you—they *have* doubts of your character; they *have* interrogated me reſpecting

reſpecting the circumſtances in which your father left you: but my parents are not of a nature to condemn without reaſon. They will make enquiries. If they find your character forfeited, they will then beg their Caroline to give up ſo improper an acquaintance. Can you fear to intruſt them with the ſecret? But tell me your ſentiments with ſincerity. If you have any objection I will not ſpeak, though forced to hear your angelic purity branded with ignominy.

My affairs remain in the ſame ſtate as when I wrote before. Mr. Danby ſtill continues to perſecute me with his addreſſes; but my hour for loving is not yet arrived.

Endeavour to be eaſy; and if you muſt be parted for a time from your beloved Charles, think how ſhort that abſence may be. Learn to look forward with hope, and remember that whilſt peace is a ſtranger to your boſom, it muſt be ſo to that of,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER III.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

THIS Henrietta, this beloved wife, hangs about my heart. Were you to ſee her tears, to hear her plead for leave to accompany me, her only friend, you muſt be more than man, if able to reſiſt them, or like me, have ſteeled your heart with the cold laws of prudence. Oh! Courtney! What are the calls of honour to thoſe of love! She complains of being branded and forſaken by the world—and ſhall I forſake her?—

Why did you, my loved Charles, cried the gentle mourner, once reſcue me from miſery, and now expoſe me to ſuch agonizing pangs as theſe? What are the dangers of foreign climes, and all the various diſtreſſes which too often attend the hapleſs traveller, to the miſeries which your abſence will create? If once you leave me, it will be to meet no more.

I aſſumed a ſterner aſpect. "I thought, Henrietta, you would not have diſtreſſed me

me with theſe woman's fears. By taking you with me I muſt loſe a father, or ſubmit to ſee you treated by my brother officers with the freedom of a miſtreſs. Whatever the world now ſuſpects, is not addreſſed to me. You muſt likewiſe know that all hopes will then be over of ever placing you in the ſituation you deſerve: for in ſpite of all your lovelineſs and virtue, Sir George Beaufort will never own me for a ſon, were he to know our marriage; and the title I muſt one day ſucceed to would only ſerve to diſtreſs me ſtill more." She was ſilent, —but her tears convinced me that my arguments did not alleviate her anguiſh: yet, go ſhe muſt not. In ſix weeks I muſt leave England, my Henrietta, and in her my every friend. What is to be done? Say ſomething to compoſe my diſtracted thoughts. Will *you* guard her defenceleſs innocence? Will you be a parent to my little Jeſſa, who has juſt began to liſp the endearing name of father?

Sir George Beaufort is proud, ambitious, and ſordid. No diſtreſs could find entrance to his heart, if it acted in oppoſition to any

of his favorite ſchemes. He has marked out a path for me. To ſacrifice happineſs for glory muſt be the lot of the unfortunate

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER IV.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* TYLNEY.

THE gloomy hour is approaching that will rob *me* of my every joy — my huſband, lover, protector, friend; — *my daughter* of a father. Tell me, my Caroline, what philoſophy can be found to ſooth ſuch anguiſh as mine?

To-morrow, my Beaufort comes to take his leave *for ever*. Such are the forebodings of my agonizing ſoul. He has written to me; but all the gentle arguments of love cannot reconcile me to this parting. You muſt not, my Caroline, diſcover the marriage of your friend. My huſband has laid his commands upon me never to have any other entruſted with the ſecret. My innocence muſt be my ſupport. I dare to be wretched rather than diſobey him. This place is to be my reſidence during his abſence.

abſence. Sir Henry Courtney, the intimate friend of my huſband, is to ſupply me with money, and from him I am to receive whatever letters he favours me with. Neceſſity alone compelled the colonel to entruſt even this favorite friend with our ſecret.

Oh Caroline! till now, I never knew what it was to be completely wretched. I could almoſt profanely wiſh my poor mother had a few years longer been deprived of that heaven ſhe ſo well deſerved, rather than I had been left an orphan, and a widow. —Even now, that my loved Charles is perhaps within the diſtance of a few ſhort miles, I experience the agony which fate has in ſtore for me, when removed much farther—when ſurrounded with the hazards of war, the threatening enemy, the arrows of death. I ſee him in my diſturbed imagination wounded, ſinking upon the bed of honour. Whilſt his miſerable Henrietta, far, far diſtant, is denied the liberty of tenderly performing thoſe ſad duties, which no friendly hand will be near to offer.

Oh, Caroline! my ſoul forebodes deſpair.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER V.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

YOUR promiſes in ſome meaſure reſtored my mind to peace: but on my arrival at * * * * yeſterday, I found my reſolution again a traytor. What a reception did I meet with from this dear romantic charmer! — On inquiring for Mrs. Melville (which name ſhe has borrowed to conceal her own) I was informed ſhe was in her dreſſing-room. I would have flown to her with rapture, but the gloomy errand I came upon with-held me.—In a few minutes ſhe came into the parlour where I ſat expecting her. She was dreſt in the deepeſt mourning — her beautiful face and hair almoſt ſhaded by a large cap and crape bonnet—her eyes red with weeping—her countenance pale as death. She was followed by her Jeſſa, who was in the arms of her maid. — She flew into my arms, and burſting into a flood of tears, ſoftly exclaimed, "Oh, cruel Beaufort! why will you forſake me?" The child held out her little hands.—

"What

"What is the meaning of all this agony? Why this ſable dreſs, my Henrietta? Why ſo much grief for a few months abſence? By thus ſoftening my mind by your gentle ſorrows, you will render me incapable of performing that taſk which an ambitious parent and cruel fortune have aſſigned me. Let me perſuade you to lay aſide this melancholy dreſs, and with it every fear. It is idle to torment yourſelf and me with fancied ills."

"Never," ſhe cried, "will I exchange this dreſs till you return in ſafety. Without you the world is a deſert. My mind is filled with unutterable grief. And ſhall my perſon be gayly decorated?--No—let them mourn together."

I endeavoured to reaſon her out of what appeared ſuch groundleſs fears—ſhewed her the impoſſibility of taking her with me. She owned the juſtneſs of my argument.—But what has reaſon to do with love? Had we conſulted reaſon, Courtney, we had never married. You once told me ſo. I own the truth; and for the firſt time in my life I wiſhed that I had never known this Henrietta. However, fortified by your

your advice, and the fear of diſobliging my father, I withſtood all her intreaties. "Say no more," ſaid I, "of going, my purpoſe is fixed; endeavour to be reconciled to what your happineſs, and your daughter's, forces me to ſubmit to, and do not ſtrive by your tears to ſhake that courage which alone will protect me, and render me deſerving that honour of which I go in ſearch. Remember too, I go to fight for that glorious maſter, who has for four years enabled me to ſupport you in eaſe and plenty."

She turned her weeping eyes upon me. "My cauſe, I ſee, is loſt, ſaid ſhe—I have no longer an advocate in that generous breaſt. Ambition has conquered love. I will ſubmit to the hard ſentence you have paſſed."

I have ſince made uſe of every means in my power to conſole her; and hope I have ſucceeded; ſhe ſeems more at eaſe. In the morning I muſt take leave of this ſweet retreat. But I will not cloſe this letter till the hour of my departure.

In

In Continuation.

I am now ſtolen from the arms of my Henrietta, who has fallen into a gentle ſlumber. I thought it was beſt to avoid a formal parting—As to myſelf, I believe I could not have borne it; and therefore think I may anſwer for my Henrietta. With what reluctance I left her, it would be impoſſible to deſcribe. I gazed on her with agonizing rapture—twice I left her, and twice returned:—"And muſt I leave thee, cried I, for that vain bubble, ambition?—Leave thee, unprotected, to a condemning world." *I dare* not dwell longer on this ſcene. I deſired her maid to be called: and after laying ſtrict injunctions on her, and every ſervant, to be faithful and obliging to their miſtreſs, promiſing to reward them amply if I found them with her at my return, I mounted my horſe, and departed from all my ſoul held dear.

In a few days I ſhall leave England. Your promiſes of guarding my treaſure when I am far diſtant, are my only conſolation.

ſolation. May heaven reward you, as you faithfully perform them.

Yours,

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER VI.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

HE is gone,—took the opportunity when ſleep had beguiled me of my wretchedneſs, to ſteal from thoſe arms to which I fear he will no more return.

To paint the horror of my preſent ſituation is impoſſible. The anguiſh of my mind has made all nature wear a dreary look. Cruel Beaufort, to leave me thus! Will you not come, my Caroline, to your hapleſs friend? never did I want your ſoothing voice ſo much as now. Entreat your parents in my name. Tell them I am not a guilty, though an unhappy wretch; teach them if poſſible to pity my diſtreſs, though the cauſe muſt be concealed. I am too much indiſpoſed to ſay more.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LET-

LETTER VII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

YOUR parents, my Caroline, unkindly refuſe the only pleaſure which Henrietta could enjoy.—For eight days I have been confined to my apartment; your letter, as it contained a denial, did not forward my recovery; but I ought to have armed myſelf for diſappointment.—I do not blame your worthy parents, my friend; no wonder they are careful of ſuch a treaſure as you are. As to their believing the tales which are ſpread to my diſadvantage, I am no longer ſurprized at it — appearances muſt be againſt me. I muſt patiently endure the ſtorms I have to encounter. One day I hope I ſhall have liberty to undeceive my friends.

Though I cannot be happy, my Caroline, I will endeavour patiently to reſign myſelf to the will of heaven, and to preſerve my life, though it is deprived of every charm, and although the ſtream of adverſity has

almoſt

almoſt overſet my feeble bark.—Baniſhed from ſociety, branded with guilt, pointed at with the finger of contempt, left a widowed wife, in the power of ſtrangers, —forced to bear that my innocent Jeſſa ſhould be looked upon as the moſt injured, though the only ſtranger to the guilt of her erring mother: Yet all this the pride of conſcious innocence would have enabled me to ſupport; but the dreadful thoughts of my Beaufort's danger, carry with them a pang worſe than death. That war, which fills ſo many ſchemers heads with pleaſure and delight, diſtracts my ſoul with anguiſh.—I have but one treaſure, and that the cruel bloody hand of devouring war will in all human probability tear forever from me.

Let them take their uncultivated tracts of land—let them have their rights of catching fiſh, or extending their conqueſts to the fartheſt extremities of the globe—ſo they ſpare but my Charles.

Ye ſons of pride, revenge, and avarice, how many boſoms do your ambition fill with grief!

I am

I am next week to receive a viſit from Sir Henry Courtney. I never ſaw him, and although I am no otherwiſe acquainted with his character, than it was told me by the partial tongue of my beloved huſband, whoſe friendſhip he ever poſſeſſed, yet methinks I dread his arrival: ſuppoſe this unaccountable weakneſs is owing to the grief with which my heart is humbled.

Write to me, Caroline. Say ſomething to compoſe my ſorrows. Tell your parents how much I thank them for ever permitting you to write to the wretched

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER VIII.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

TO tell you how much I ſympathize in all you ſuffer, my ſweet friend, would be a vain attempt. Endeavour to be eaſy, and patiently ſubmit to the ſevere trials which heaven has thought fit to inflict on you—Think how it would wound the boſom of your huſband, to hear that you were in danger, by immoderate grief,

of

of ſhortening a life ſo valuable to him, ſo neceſſary to his happineſs,—and that too, for what it was not in his power, or your own, to prevent. Think how his noble heart feels the ſame pangs with yours, for this cruel abſence. Add not then to his affliction, by deſtroying your own health.

I once more intreat you, permit me to make my parents the confidents of your marriage; I will anſwer for their ſecrecy. Then ſhould I be allowed to fly to my friend: yet why do I aſk what you ſo often have forbidden?

I agree with you that the ſocial paſſions embelliſh every ſcene of life. Without them the ſun loſes its ſplendor—the flowers all the beauties of their tints, and all the harmony of nature becomes diſcord and melancholy gloom: yet ſuffer not your mind to be wounded by the ſlights and inſults of the undiſcerning; for no ſtain of diſhonour has the bleeding heart of my Henrietta to wipe off.

Without a conſcience ſelf-approved, and a mind of virtue, what could give pleaſure to the human ſoul? Daily experience might teach the inhabitants of this

world

world how unfit they are to judge each other—and leave the cauſe of thoſe, whom ſome unlucky circumſtance may tempt them to blame, to be tried before a wiſer and better tribunal.

I hope by the time this letter reaches your hand, you will be in better ſpirits, and that you will be chearfully converſing with the friend of your Beaufort. I am highly pleaſed with him for his intended viſit, and wonder what ſort of a being he is—handſome as your colonel, no doubt—polite, ſenſible, genteel—ſuch is the picture my imagination has drawn of him.—Heigh ho! who knows but the ſtrange perverſeneſs of my parents may have prevented my making a conqueſt. Dread the ſeeing of him! I think you ſaid you did—what ſhould make you dread? I ſuppoſe the man will be ſtruck dumb at the ſight of ſo much beauty. It will be happy for us all if he does not fall deſperately in love with you.

I will not be diſturbed—I am writing a ſermonizing epiſtle to a beloved friend. This teazing Mr. Danby—The wretch ſeems to have nothing elſe to do with his

precious

precious time, but to employ it in tormenting me. Had I the valuable cap of which Fortunatus was once poſſeſſed, I would freely give it him, provided he would wiſh himſelf ten thouſand miles diſtant from me, and promiſe never to return. Married to ſuch a being! No, thank you, good folks, that will never do; I would as ſoon wed a jackanapes. The one, though frightful, is as nature made him; the other has taken pains to make himſelf ten times more ridiculous and ugly than nature ever deſigned him to be. Fortune muſt be blind as a beetle, or would ſuch a being have ever been a favorite? My ſiſter Lucy has lately been a moſt preſſing advocate for this man; ſome bauble, I ſuppoſe, purchaſed her favour. In return for her good offices—I will gladly make her a preſent of the man himſelf.

But what is all this trifling to you?—Pardon me, my dear—the powdered fop has entirely broken the thread of my diſcourſe: but for him I ſhould have continued my letter in the ſentimental ſtile, even to the end—and ſpouted wiſdom as well as any Roman ſenator ever did.

Promiſe

Promiſe me in your next that you will endeavour to be chearful. Send me a good account of your health—and in ſpite of Danby, I ſhall be happy.

Ever yours,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER IX.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

SIR Henry Courtney has been here ten days, and yet he talks not of going. He has taken rooms at a farm houſe that is within a mile of my habitation, and pays me two or three viſits every day. He has ſhewn me ſeveral letters from Colonel Beaufort, and the copies of his own. My huſband, in the ſtrongeſt terms, recommends me to his care, and deſires him to furniſh me with what money I ſhould want—but he did not aſk him to come and live with me, which he has almoſt done ſince he came into this part of the world. He has told the people that he is a near relation of my huſband's—and that he has determined, during his abſence, to ſpend

as

as much time with me as poſſible. I do not thank him for his tale. The world cannot have a worſe opinion of me than it has had for four years paſt—I would gladly ſhun the having recourſe to any falſehood, in defence of a character that has never yet been juſtly forfeited.—To do Sir Henry Courtney juſtice, there never was a man that behaved with a more delicate and reſpectful politeneſs—he uſes his utmoſt endeavours to amuſe me. My pretty Jeſſa is already paſſionately fond of him: her little arms are held out for him to take her every time ſhe ſees him. The idea you had of him was not an unjuſt one. With a perſon and addreſs formed to pleaſe, he has the art of ſtealing ſorrow from the miſerable. His voice is ſoft and harmonious, his manners gentle and inſinuating; he reads with a tone that adds beauty to the charms of poetry, and plays on the harpſichord, German flute, and violin, inimitably—ſpeaks ſeveral languages with fluency: yet I wiſh he were gone.—I cannot be amuſed during the abſence of him who alone formed my happineſs. He endeavours to reaſon me out of my fears, by

making

making light of them; to add weight to his arguments, repeats unnumbered inſtances of people's returning in ſafety—after having been many years abroad and in engagements. To ſuch diſcourſe I could for ever liſten. The ſinking wretch will to the laſt be catching at ſtraws. He does not tell me, Caroline, how many loſt their lives to the one that returned in ſafety.

Oh! why did Beaufort cruelly refuſe to grant me my requeſt? Gladly would I have attended him, even to the burning ſhores of India, or Ruſſia's frozen bounds —Spare my huſband, ye ſons of war! ſhield him, kind heaven, from danger! protect him from the lifted arm of every threatening foe! May the keen arrows of death fly far from that boſom where every virtue, and all my happineſs is placed. Grant me the ſoft delight of ſeeing my ſoldier return, crowned with the laurels of victory and glory! Then will joy wanton through the boſom to which it has been ſo long a ſtranger.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LET-

LETTER X.

Sir HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq*;

THE hour is at length arrived that has deprived me of all my indifference and boasted philosophy. You know the trust my friend Beaufort left to my care—nothing less than the beautiful Henrietta.—But I have before told you of her imprudent marriage. I freely undertook the charge, whilst I laught at his fears and womanish complaints for the thoughts of leaving a wife behind him; and that too after being married four years. I will at the same time own to you, that the strict care he observed, and the solitude in which his fair one had been buried from the time of her marriage, were circumstances which gave me no high opinion of his choice. I concluded that he was drawn into an indifferent connection—was ashamed of the lady, and of what he had done. However, as I, at the time of his departure, strictly intended to perform the promise I had made him, I soon after he had left England set off

to

to pay his charge a viſit, and agree upon ſome plan of ſettling matters between us. I arrived at this beautiful romantic retreat about four in the afternoon. The lady was walking in the garden: but on being informed of my arrival, haſtened into the room, and politely welcomed me to ****.

To give you an idea of my ſurpriſe, would be impoſſible. Such a blaze of beauty—ſuch an elegance of perſon and of manners.—I ſtammered out ſome compliment; ſhe, imputing my confuſion to fatigue, immediately ordered tea. In the evening I left her,—ſlept the firſt night at an inn, and afterwards procured two or three good rooms at a farmer's, whoſe landlord had fitted up ſome of the apartments for his own uſe, when he choſe (as it ſeems he often does) to retire a few weeks from the world at his honeſt tenant's —giving the man leave to make what he can of them when he is abſent. I propoſed ſtaying only two days in this part of the world—have been here fourteen; nor can I bring myſelf to think of leaving it. I know not what Mrs. Melville thinks of my ſtaying (Melville is the name ſhe goes by)

—but this I know, that I wiſh I had never ſeen her. Had I been in Beaufort's place, never ſhould any circumſtance whatever have parted me from ſuch a woman.

I have ever yet, Will, acted up to the character I have aſſumed—but my heart, I fear, will make a traitor of me. Why was ſuch a temptation thrown in my way! Reaſon, honour, friendſhip, are all on Beaufort's ſide—but love ſeems determined to ſet them at defiance.

Mrs. Melville, at preſent, weeps inceſſantly for the abſence of her huſband, nor has it been in my power to conſole her. She ſometimes, in an agony of grief, ſoftly exclaims,—"Cruel huſband! why was I left behind?" Then claſping in her arms her little daughter, who is a miniature of her angelic mother, ſhe begs my pardon, and withdraws to recover herſelf. I ſcarce dare to admit a hope—yet cannot baniſh it from my boſom. Like a furious torrent, this love overwhelms my ſoul. Prudence and honour are but a feeble defence againſt it. I know not what to do, or how to proceed. A variety of contending paſſions makes a wreck of my mind. I know your ſentiments,

ſentiments, therefore wiſh you not to write. You may condemn—but were you to ſee the object of my guilty flame, you would not be ſurprized.

Henrietta is the lovelieſt figure the indulgent hand of nature ever formed—and her mind is as great as her perſon is charming. Her eyes expreſs the dear, the tender ſenſibility of her heart. On her cheeks is ſometimes painted a bluſh, ſoft and lovely as the bluſh of infant ſpring, which too often gives place to a paleneſs, fair as the lily of the vale. With all this beauty ſhe is as humble too.—Black is the only dreſs ſhe wears. I have frequently begged that ſhe would lay aſide thoſe melancholy robes. "Never, Sir Henry, ſhe replied, till my Beaufort returns—my heart and my perſon ſhall mourn together. I was never fond of dreſs—but at this time my gloomy ſoul has an averſion to it." However, I hope ſoon to ſee her in a gayer dreſs and humour too. The ladies of this age are not noted for their conſtancy. Beaufort is abſent, and has thrown a treaſure in my way that I am determined to make the moſt of. There was ever a fickleneſs in

his temper. He has rambled, like the bee, from flower to flower. Perhaps he is tired of Henrietta. If he has thrown her from his boſom, who will blame me for ſhelter-ing her in mine? And is not his leaving her a proof of his inconſtancy? Would any man but Colonel Beaufort have left ſo beau-tiful a wife to the care of a gay young fellow? It is true, our friendſhip began even in our infant years—from which pe-riod he has been a witneſs to my indif-ference for the fair ſex—but was the paſt any ſecurity for the future? Regardleſs of her charms himſelf, did he think others would be ſo too? Yet how can I ſay re-gardleſs? He parted from her with agony; and left England, as the miſer would his wealth.

I know not what I would ſay—I believe I want to make the weakneſs of others an excuſe for my own.

HENRY COURTNEY.

LET-

LETTER XI.

WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq*; *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

THE friendſhip I have ever borne you induces me to take up my pen, although forbidden to write. Can I be ſilent when in danger of loſing my friend? when he is in danger too of loſing himſelf?—

Would you take advantage of the abſence of Colonel Beaufort—to wound his boſom with irreparable wretchedneſs? Was it a proof of the want of his affection for his Henrietta, by appointing his deareſt friend her guardian and protector? Is it poſſible for Courtney to become the ſlave of paſſion, and give way to a baſe deſign that even the moſt hardened villain would ſhudder to reflect upon?—Leave the habitation of your friend, and return no more to it till he is there to welcome you—and give him reaſon to thank you for having acquitted the truſt he repoſed in you with honour. Let the beauty, elegance, and innocence which you admire in the wife of

your friend, be her protection. What a pity would it be to ruin ſo fair a fabrick! Let the tears, which you ſay ſhe ſhed for the abſence of a beloved huſband, teach you to be her friend. Make no attempt, I beſeech you, to deſtroy that virtue over which you could not triumph. Her purity, her affection for her huſband, would, one would think, be enough to reſtrain the moſt daring libertine: and have they loſt with you their power? You, who have ſo often been held up as an example by parents to their children, whoſe alliance has been ſought for by ſeveral noble families, and who have been a favourite with the fair ſex, though not a rake.

I find myſelf intereſted in the cauſe of this lovely widowed wife—The path ſhe is left to tread would be difficult, even if our ſex were to ſuffer her to paſs unmoleſted.—The world already condemns her—even her own ſex refuſe to hold acquaintance with her. They look upon her as fallen from that height which unſullied reputation ſtill gives to them. How cruel would it be, Harry, to add ſtill greater afflictions on this unfortunate, virtuous fair one!

one! And were ſhe to yield to your diſhonourable ſolicitations (which I have too good an opinion of her to ſuppoſe will be the caſe) what would be the reward? Miſery and gloomy repentance. An injured friend will return. One crime draws a man on to commit another. You would, it is likely, with your ſword, endeavour to juſtify the moſt piercing injury—if you are the ſacrifice, how would you be able to juſtify yourſelf on your ſudden entrance into eternity?—

Conquer this paſſion, Courtney, in its infancy—permit it not to take root within your heart. The difficulty is not ſo great as you may imagine. It is eaſier to ſhun vice than to withdraw ourſelves from its ſnares, when once entangled. Pleaſure is daily ſpreading her deluſive charms to influence the innocent and ſooth the guilty. Reaſon, religion, and honour, are the ſoul's friendly monitors; which, by their inſtinctive faculties, will point out thoſe objects that are to be purſued or avoided. Permit them to exert their powers—they will amply reward you in the end, for

your integrity and reſolution in following the dictates they inſpire.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

LETTER XII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

THIS Courtney, my Caroline—I know not what to make of him. He took leave of me laſt week—I rejoiced at his departure; but as he is the eſteemed friend of an abſent huſband, I could not think of giving him reaſon to ſuppoſe his company was diſagreeable. His abſence, I own, gave me pleaſure; I was then able to indulge the melancholy which ſuited the gloomineſs of my heart. I could then unmoleſted wander through the ſhade, and enjoy my beloved ſolitude,—for now my Beaufort's gone, I no longer ſigh for any company but your's—ſince that is denied, any other would be irkſome.

With a kind of enthuſiaſtic rapture I frequented theſe walks, which your company and my beloved Charles's once made ſo pleaſing—" How oft, I cried, my dear wanderer,

wanderer, have we in this place rambled with delight! and whilſt the moon ſhed her ſilver influence around, ſhe has likewiſe been a witneſs to our vows." In ſhort, my friend, I had ſettled my account with melancholy—and found ſome conſolation in her ſad ſociety—for even melancholy has her pleaſures. But on the third day after Sir Henry had taken his leave, he returned.—My ſurpriſe was too great to be concealed—he obſerved it.—"I am afraid, ſaid he, my return is as unwelcome as it was unexpected. However, as I had no particular buſineſs to keep me from this place, I thought I could not better acquit myſelf of my promiſe to my friend, than in ſpending the time of his abſence in endeavouring to amuſe the treaſure he entruſted to my care. I have again taken poſſeſſion of my old lodgings;—but though once more become a near neighbour, will not preſume to intrude upon you oftener, Mrs. Melville, than is agreeable."

What could I ſay, Caroline? What ought I to have ſaid? If I had appeared to have any doubts I muſt have ſhewn a great

deal of vanity, and have diſcovered a fear it were better to conceal.

But indeed, I do not like this man—his behaviour is to the higheſt degree alarming. To add to my regrets, and apprehenſions, no news from the Colonel. I have mentioned my fears and impatience to Sir Henry; he has ſent a ſervant to * * * *, to wait the arrival of the packet, not doubting but there will be letters—Pray Heaven ſend there may! Sir Henry has ventured lately to tell me of charms I wiſh not to poſſeſs—and has even blamed the coldneſs of his friend, in letting the calls of honour conquer thoſe of love. I have vindicated my Beaufort for what has wounded my poor boſom with the keeneſt woe—and he ſeemed convinced by my arguments in his friend's favour—at the ſame time gave ſome hints of the fickleneſs of his ſex, particularly that of the gentlemen of the ſword. "Perhaps, ſaid I, they are rovers, like too many others, till Hymen has bound them in chains—and then, Sir Henry, their gallantries are at an end—I mean with thoſe whoſe ſouls, like Beaufort and Henrietta, were firſt united in the bonds

bonds of love—an angel could not rival him in my heart."—"An angel has already conquered his, ſaid he, ſighing, therefore you can be in no danger of loſing it." "I have but a mean opinion of my own power of pleaſing, Sir Henry, but I have ever ſtudied to deſerve the generous love of my noble huſband, who raiſed me from the moſt abject miſery to eaſe and happineſs,—who ſoftened the ſorrows of age for my helpleſs parent—and eaſed the pangs of death by taking her daughter to his arms; and by that means ſheltering her from the dangers and hardſhips of a cruel world." Our converſation was here interrupted, by a man driving up to the door in the moſt elegant little whiſky I ever ſaw. Sir Henry went out and preſently returned:—"Pardon me, madam, ſaid he, for the liberty in having purchaſed the poor trifle for your uſe.—You had no convenience of breathing the healthful fragrance of the air, but by the laborious fatigue of walking. I hope it will ſerve two purpoſes—that of amuſing, and preſerving health—therefore, in my friend Beaufort's name, I muſt beg you to accept it—and

I luckily

I luckily have a horſe with me that will ſuit."—I made a thouſand objections—however, after all, was obliged to conſent to make uſe of it whilſt he remains in this part of the country. In the ſame manner every rarity the ſeaſon produces is ſent me. I endeavour to ſhew the impropriety of a married woman's accepting preſents from any but her huſband. "Situations muſt be conſidered, he ſays,—he is left to ſupply a huſband's place in being a protector and friend;—he intrudes himſelf as a gueſt very often, therefore the obligations are ſtill on his ſide." As to my Jeſſa, ſhe is as fine as the daughter of an Indian king—already has this man rivaled me in her little heart—If he is abſent half a day ſhe is, in her language, continually inquiring for him, and going out to meet him.

The ſervant is returned. No letters from the Colonel, though he waited the arrival of two packets. What can be the meaning of his ſilence? What, has he already forgotten an abſent wife? This man too adds to my diſtreſs—The chaiſe is at the door—I muſt not indulge vain fears—

fears—a thouſand things may have happened to prevent his friend from writing.

Adieu, my Caroline—I go with a heart too heavy to be amuſed. This letter has been written at different times. You muſt excuſe the length of my ſilence, and the ſhortneſs of my letters:—I am too unſettled to attend to any thing.

Yours,

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XIII.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

BY giving way to ſo many fears you will deſtroy your health, and render yourſelf unable to ſupport the abſence of the man you love. If poſſible, never at any certain time expect a letter. Adverſe winds, or a thouſand unavoidable events, may prevent its arriving at the time your impatience may lead you to expect it.—As to Sir Henry Courtney, I know not what to ſay of him. To ſee you, Henrietta, is to love: but I do not think you have reaſons to encourage apprehenſions on his

his account. I have lately heard a moſt amiable character of him; and, though in all the pride of youth, he is noted for his ſobriety and unſullied honour. Of ſuch a man as this your huſband could have no doubts. In any other he would not have repoſed ſuch confidence. Rather rejoice, my friend, that you are indulged with ſuch a companion, to ſooth your tender fears.

Theſe obſtinate old people, and perverſe young ones, will not permit me to ſee you. I could almoſt wiſh my envious ſiſter married to her favourite Danby. Indeed the puniſhment would be rather ſevere—but ſhe deſerves it for her ill-nature and folly.

Why will you not ſuffer yourſelf to be amuſed, my Henrietta? The proſpects of almoſt every one afford a gloomy, as well as a pleaſing ſide—keep not therefore your eyes conſtantly fixed on the diſagreeable, but turn them ſometimes on the pleaſing.

As to my own ſituation, it is ſtrangely altered—My parents, determined to favour the addreſſes of the hateful Danby, are become ſuſpicious of my conduct. My

ſiſter

ſiſter is ſet over me as a ſpy, and well does Lucy acquit herſelf in her new employment. It is not unſuitable to her diſpoſition. The being no favourite with nature has given a ſourneſs to her temper that is intolerable. Her ſenſe is of the ill-natured kind, and every pleaſing figure is inſtantly the object of her envy.

Though my heart is indifferent to all the merits and accompliſhments which others diſcover in Mr. Danby, or rather in his fortune—it is not ſo to the ſhining virtues, the ſuperior good qualities of a Mr. Cornwall, a young Clergyman, who has only been a few months in this neighbourhood. Chance has often brought us together—and I have reaſon to fear we are but too pleaſing to each other; but the difference of our ſituations, baniſhes every hope. It is that alone has withheld the youth from diſcovering the amazing power my charms have had on his honeſt heart. —However, if he knew the real ſentiments of his favourite, he would not have ſo much reaſon to fear as he ſeems to apprehend.

You

You may, poſſibly, enquire how I came to diſcover my power over the heart of this youth, when he never informed me of it. Pſha! Henrietta—you in love—and married too in the moſt agreeable, and even romantic manner, to aſk ſuch a queſtion—Why lovers have a language only intelligible to themſelves. It is true, till very lately, I never made the important diſcovery. However, I cannot ſet about explaining, what it is poſſible I may one day wiſh I had never learnt;—but it is certain my heart has taken its flight—and if it is not to be found in the boſom of Cornwall, it may be gone to Japan, for what I know of the matter. You cannot therefore wonder if I ſhould readily accept of his, to ſupply the loſs I have ſuſtained.

Adieu—thank me for the ſecret I have entruſted you with—endeavour to be chearful and eaſy—and you ſhall ſtill poſſeſs the ſame place in my heart you ever did, in ſpite of the ſly thief that has ſtolen it.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Sir HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq*;

I HAVE for the firſt time forfeited my honour. I have withheld Beaufort's letters from his wife. I here incloſe you a copy of thoſe I received; but have committed the originals to the flames. Every other that he ſends will ſhare the ſame fate, without being read. I will ſpare myſelf the mortifying agony of peruſing them. I intend writing to him immediately — and muſt contrive ſome excuſe for Mrs. Beaufort's not anſwering his letters. He will hear from *me* no more.

By ſending you the incloſed, I furniſh you with weapons againſt myſelf. Perhaps I would wiſh to do ſo. I cannot conquer this unlucky paſſion. It ſubdues my reaſon, and muſt be gratified. I almoſt die for this Henrietta. To ſee her in the arms of another—it muſt not, cannot be. She ſhall be mine. Talk not of honour, friendſhip, and a thouſand other ridiculous chimeras,

—the

—the rights of love are ſuperior to every other.

My faithful Thomas proves a moſt uſeful aſſiſtant. Till now, I never gave the ingenious raſcal an opportunity of diſcovering his good qualities. Already he is in poſſeſſion of the affections of Mrs. Melville's favourite ſervant, who is nurſe to the little Jeſſa. To her he has ventured to diſcloſe his maſter's paſſion, and given ſome hints of the inconſtancy of Beaufort — ſaid, his maſter was ſecretly diſtracted with fear on account of her miſtreſs — as he ſuſpected the Colonel had made uſe of this opportunity to abandon her for ever—hinted as if ſhe were not the firſt. Nor do I doubt, but from ſo good a channel, this tale will ſoon be conveyed to the ears of Henrietta; a part of it I believe already has. With a trembling voice ſome tender doubts have gently tranſpired—to theſe doubts I have returned ambiguous anſwers. No time is to be loſt.—Henrietta's ſilence cannot long remain unaccounted for. Love is attended with ſuſpicion; of that, this young beauty has convinced me. In her boſom the ſeeds of

of jealouſy are timely ſown, and I'll take care they ſhall be carefully foſtered.

Spare your reproofs, my friend — they diſtreſs me perhaps; but they cannot conquer. I have proceeded too far to retreat—and without the aſſiſtance of this paſſion, the fear of a diſcovery would urge me on. The attempt would be attended with equal ſhame, whether crowned with ſucceſs or not. You ſee I am but half a villain, yet ſpare thy reproof; my ſoul is ſteeled againſt them.

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XV.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

ABSENT from all I love—my hopes all reſt upon your friendſhip. Endeavour to conſole my Henrietta. You promiſed to ſee her. Exert your influence to baniſh every tormenting fear from her gentle, timid boſom.

With ſafety I reached the army; but cannot partake the chearfulneſs of my gay companions. The lovely Henrietta alone engroſſes

engroſſes my thoughts. I ſtill ſee her tears, —ſtill hear her ſoft complaints. Love is ſaid to be the parent of noble actions; but when doomed to bear the pangs of abſence, it is all gloom and diſcontent. Scarcely can an ambitious thought find entrance into my boſom. In vain the ſun unfolds its ſplendour, and chears the inhabitants of earth —I find no pleaſure in its rays. The negro train of night ſuits me much better.

Believe me, Courtney, till now I never knew how much I loved—A huſband, parent, lover, — you will one day know the force of theſe endearing ties. My heart hovers round that ſweet retreat which holds my weeping fair, whoſe rural beauties, I truſt, will help to ſooth her cares. Oh! Courtney! you know not the ten thouſand virtues of my Henrietta—her perſon, all lovely as it is, conceals a mind which only could excel it. Rage, hateful in all, is ſtill more deteſtable in the fair ſex—but no rude paſſion ever yet found entrance to her boſom. Yet the world looks coldly on my Henrietta, and brands her as if the practiſer of vice. Merit, beauty, and virtue, ſeldom eſcape envy and detraction.

Rude

Rude and harſh are the clamours of war to my bleeding heart, but deſpair will give me courage—whilſt the tendereſt affection will make me careful of that life, which is of ſo much conſequence to the peace of her I love. We have every kind of diverſion going forward, even in the camp. The common ſoldiers are ſometimes expoſed to diſtreſſes; but our enemies furniſh us with plenty. I have met with many agreeable companions in my brother officers, and ſome old friends. They ſee the cloud which hangs upon my brow, and kindly try to drive it thence—they are delighted with the path which ambition has marked out for them, and even exult in that war, which alone would enable them to gain the wiſhed for ſummit.

With me how different is the caſe! my ambition was all gratified when heaven gave me Henrietta. I tremble at the thought of war; becauſe it expoſes, not only her, but a thouſand mortals to the ſhafts of ſorrow. Could I have been permitted to paſs my days with my angel companion, and able to ſupport her above diſtreſs, I had been content. How do I envy the happy

ſhepherds,

ſhepherds, the inhabitants of that dear village from which I am baniſhed, whoſe minds do not aſpire above what can be purchaſed with innocence and eaſe, whoſe fortune is equal to their wiſhes, and whoſe induſtry is health and amuſement. They know no fears, no agonizing torments of abſence and ſuſpence; no malignant clouds of envy or ambition hover near them. Strangers to guilt, they fear no ſhafts of ill fortune; but with happy ſecurity can laugh at the unconſtancy of greatneſs — whilſt I, a ſlave to the pride and ambition of others, am baniſhed from old England's hoſpitable ſhores, with a heart bleeding with every woe — forced to lead a party of men to ſpread deſolation and murder around — compelled to conceal an union that would do honour to the greateſt monarch in the world—and ſuffer the faireſt excellence to be robbed of reputation, the brighteſt ornament the ſex can boaſt.—

Pardon me, Courtney, for tiring you with fond complaints; but you know my heart, know it has cauſe to mourn; and therefore will not grudge me this poor relief.

Write

Write to me, my friend, and honeſtly tell me how Henrietta ſupports my abſence. Say, how did ſhe receive you? Did ſhe not weep? Sigh ſoftly for her Beaufort? And breathe a prayer for his return? Yes, I am ſure ſhe did — her gentle mind can know no peace now I am abſent.

I muſt now conclude this letter—and reſume the pen in the painful pleaſing taſk of writing to my Henrietta. How different muſt appear my ſentiments! Every fear muſt be carefully concealed—leſt they add to thoſe agonizing ones placed within her heart. You, my Harry, muſt be the friend, the comforter of both; and may heaven bountifully reward you for your generous friendſhip, and undoubted ſincerity.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XVI.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

(Encloſed in the foregoing.)

WITH what joy does Beaufort ſit down to addreſs his Henrietta; now arrived in ſafety at the army. Set your

your heart at reſt, my fair one—your virtues will guard me from every danger; you muſt be a favourite with heaven; and on that account its care and mercy will be extended over thoſe you love. In the midſt of war we talk of peace. And although but juſt arrived, a ſpeedy return is expected. Therefore recall thoſe ſpirits your fears had baniſhed—and again be all yourſelf. Notwithſtanding I am for a few weeks to be abſent from you, my heart will not one moment leave you — ſleep cannot baniſh your idea. I ſee you, my Henrietta, all lovely as you are—and even at this diſtance, hear the ſound of your loved voice. You are all the real treaſure I poſſeſs. Obſerve, and be careful of, the truſt your huſband has repoſed in you. If I find any alteration in the looks of Henrietta, I ſhall call her wilful heart to a ſevere account; with eager tenderneſs ſhall I examine that dear countenance, which is too deeply printed on my heart to be inſenſible of the leaſt alteration: fears and tears leave their traces behind them — therefore give not way to either, as you expect a favourable ſentence.

Fear

Fear magnifies every danger. Our ſituation is not what it is deſcribed: our enemies fear us. Plenty and chearfulneſs fill our hearts with courage, and inſure ſucceſs to our arms. Write ſoon and often, my Henrietta; your letters will baniſh ſorrow from my boſom, and enable me to gain a laurel to lay at your feet, therefore indulge me with them; Sir Henry Courtney will convey them to me. Continue to teach our Jeſſa to liſp my name; my abſence will not give her time to forget me.

I hope my worthy friend Courtney has paid you the promiſed viſit, and that he was a welcome viſitor to our cottage. He is an amiable, accompliſhed man, and till you took my heart intirely into your own poſſeſſion, he had a large ſhare of it; conſequently it is but juſt that you endeavour to atone for the theft you committed. From him I ſhall expect a good account of you: —therefore give me no reaſon to complain. You find I am become a threatener—you know who made me ſo.

With ſincerity, and never dying love, I can be only and ever yours,

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XVII.

Sir HENRY COURTNEY *to Colonel* BEAUFORT.

AT one part or other of their lives men are made fools by that dangerous creature, woman. The folly of others is my guard againſt their ſnares. I have ſeen your Henrietta, and I yeſterday took my leave of her, and your favourite retreat —the beauty of her perſon, and the pleaſing ſimplicity of her manners, are indeed an excuſe for you. Mrs. Beaufort is in perfect health; but has, in playing with her daughter, and endeavouring to ſave her from falling to the ground, ſprained her wriſt in ſo violent a manner, that ſhe has deſired me to make her excuſes for not writing, till after the receipt of your next letter. She is in tolerable ſpirits—therefore endeavour to be ſatisfied with an abſence, the time of which is employed much better than in ſighing and whining at the feet of a female.

You had ever a decent ſhare of vanity, and I doubt not but it led you to think,

that

that Henrietta could not ſurvive your leaving her and England. Have done with all womaniſh complaints. Let not ſuch reflections impede your way to glory. I ſaw no tears,—heard no complaints, during my ſtay at * * * *. On the contrary, we were as chearful as the ſeaſon, and every day after dinner drank your health and ſucceſs to the Britiſh arms. Many times did I hear her ſyren voice, tuning ſome melodious air. At that moment I liſtened, and forgave you. You know my paſſion for muſic. She ſighed at reading your very diſmal complaints, and, ſmiling, gave me your letter to peruſe, enquiring if I did not admire your amazing conſtancy. "It is I own, unfaſhionable, and rare, ſaid I; but the fair object"—"Huſh, Sir Henry, I had rather be able to partake the pleaſing amuſement of the polite world, than hear compliments from any of your ſex: but muſt be content to remain in this my priſon, till my hero returns to free me."

Yet in ſpite of all their pretended indifference to the charms of flattery, the man who would wiſh to gain a female heart,

muſt flatter, lye, and cringe: therefore I ſtand no chance.

Tell me in your next what is going forward abroad, and whether we are likely to triumph over theſe ſcoundrels the French. Let me hear of every heroic feat our arms perform. Such a letter will purchaſe a much longer one from me—and I will then endeavour to ſend you an account of what is going forward on this ſide of the water. Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XVIII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

TO call in queſtion the wiſdom and juſtice of heaven, is to act like the child of guilt and folly—that preſumptuous child am I. No letters are yet arrived from my beloved Beaufort. I hear too, from undoubted authority, that he has been faithleſs and a rover: even his friend did not contradict that character. Perhaps he has left me forever—perhaps he wiſhes to ſhake me off, and I am to be abandoned

to

to my fortune. Sure he did not leave me to be the prey of his artful friend. Our marriage, I believe, would not ſtand good according to the cruel laws of this land. We were both under age, when united—even now I have only ſeen twenty years of life. An old clergyman, tottering on the brink of an opening grave, and ſurrounded with poverty, for a conſiderable bribe, joined our hands. Death ſoon after ſealed his lips, and reſcued him from the danger of a diſcovery. At that time I was too young to conſider of theſe matters, and my poor mother was unacquainted with them. I am interrupted.

* * * * * *

In Continuation.

Alas! what will become of me! My ſoul is ſunk down, and humbled by deſpair. Oh that I were permitted to lay down my ſorrows and ſink at once into the peaceful grave. Sir Henry has dared to talk of love—he has given hints that would turn every faculty of the gentleſt mind to rage and fury. Colonel Beaufort long ſuſpected my truth—long had repent-

ed of his imprudent union, and wiſhed me to ſeek happineſs with ſome other lover. He, the hateful Courtney, was appointed the meſſenger of theſe tidings. Do not his ſilence, and the not giving me a direction where to find him, confirm my wretchedneſs.

His friend would always take care to convey my letters to him. I ſuſpected no deceit, and ſubmitted. He wiſhed not, he deſigned not to hear from the deſerted Henrietta. His father has provided a proper match for him, a lady of rank and fortune.

And is this poſſible? Am I in reality ſo miſerable a wretch? It is even ſo, my Caroline; my ſorrows wear no friendly maſk to conceal the horrors they bring with them. Sir Henry Courtney has offered to protect me. This man of probity and honour, has dared to inſult the wife of his friend with the offer of a ſettlement; provided ſhe will conſent to diſgrace her ſex, by becoming his miſtreſs.

Yes, Caroline, I am, in ſpite of all the powers of injuſtice, Beaufort's wife: nor will I ever give up my right to that dear name,

name, but with my life. Yet I will not interrupt his happineſs. I will not prevent his marrying ſome other fair. Write no more to me at this place. I have ſtrong ſuſpicions that my ruin is deſigned. I know not where I ſhall go to find protection, but will put my cauſe into the hands of him that made me, and follow the only path that appears to ſave me. Be ſecret, my Caroline, and ſoon I hope to convey a letter to you from a place of ſafety.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XIX.

WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Eſq. to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

HE that ſtands ſelf condemned wants no other accuſer: Yet, ſtop your baneful deſigns, my friend. Raſhneſs and guilt muſt produce miſery. "The truly great and noble ſpirit (I once heard you obſerve to a friend, who was ridiculing your gravity and pretended ſcruples of conſcience, reſpecting the deſtruction of the fair-ſex) takes a pride in protecting in-

nocence"—and dare you become the deſtroyer of it?

Love is a heavenly paſſion, planted in the breaſt to create happineſs. It ſubdues to ſoftneſs the moſt ſavage heart; but the paſſion which has not virtue for its baſis, deſerves a much coarſer name than that of love. To gain a compleat victory over ourſelves may be a difficult taſk, but conqueſt would amply reward our pains. Why will you forfeit the ſelf-approving ſatisfaction of looking back on a well ſpent life? Why ſo carefully are you nurſing torments for your own boſom, and laying up cares for the decline of life, which will want the downy pillow of uninterrupted peace? But if your own future happineſs has no weight, think of your friend—think of the blooming Henrietta: What daggers are you placing in their boſoms! Beaufort, you ſay, has been your friend from infancy; and will you thus repay him for the unbounded confidence he has repoſed in you?

But what avails arguing with a madman? In few words, give up your baſe deſigns, or you are no more my friend.

Every

Every means in my power ſhall immediately be exerted to ſave this ill-fated pair. I here return you the copies of the letters which you ſent me. Read them, Courtney, and let them bring conviction to your heart. Let them reſtore you to that honour which you ſeem going to baniſh. Let them induce you to become again deſerving of Beaufort's generous unſuſpecting friendſhip. Give them to the affronted wife of your injured friend, and make a candid confeſſion of all your baſeneſs.

My heart bled when I read the colonel's letters. They at once confeſs the huſband, lover, friend. And can you form the baſe deſign of breaking theſe tender ties aſunder, a deſign which my ſoul ſhudders even to think of? are you already become ſuch an adept in wickedneſs? Repent, make reſtitution, or I ſhould bluſh to call you by the name of friend.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

LETTER XX.

Sir HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.*

YOUR letter came too late to ſave Henrietta from wretchedneſs: whilſt her own watchful timid innocence and virtue have protected her from ruin. She is gone I know not where, driven by me from her own habitation, from the aſylum her huſband had choſen for her. A curſe upon her raſhneſs! but more juſtly may I curſe my own guilt. With what indignation did ſhe receive the offers of my love! With what ſpirit expreſs her deteſtation of my pretended generoſity! "If I am ſo miſerable, ſaid ſhe, as to be abandoned by colonel Beaufort, I will never be the ſlave of vice. I can learn to be content with poverty, ſo long as innocence is mine. Leave this houſe, Sir Henry, never preſume to enter theſe doors again. When colonel Beaufort returns, you and I muſt account for our conduct: but if ever you wiſh me to pardon, or yourſelf to be excuſed by heaven for your unequalled inſolence

lence and guilt, lift not your arm againſt my Beaufort."

She left the room. I admired her noble ſpirit; but my pride was wounded. However I inſtantly departed. For a conſiderable bribe my fellow the ſame evening obtained a promiſe from his believing nymph, to admit me into the apartment of her miſtreſs. Whether th injured Mrs. Beaufort overheard the bargain I know not, but the next morning ſhe was gone, even her little Jeſſa left behind. In vain has every place, for twenty miles round, been ſearched to diſcover her retreat. Not the leaſt tidings can we hear of her. This morning, on ſearching the drawers of her dreſſing table, the following lines were found directed to me.

"I am above reproaching the guilty. "Suffer not my ſweet Jeſſa to want a "friend, till her father returns. If he has "forſaken his wife, he ſurely will protect "his child.

"HENRIETTA BEAUFORT."

To

To deſcribe the agonies I felt when I found ſhe was gone, would be impoſſible. The poor girl, whoſe integrity had been forfeited to the united powers of love and intereſt, was almoſt diſtracted. She raved, wept, and was in ſuch diſtreſs, that I was obliged to make uſe of every art to ſave her from the fatal effects of her own deſpair. "Oh! what a miſtreſs had ſhe betrayed! What a friend had ſhe loſt!" She then embraced the child, and on her knees begged I would permit her to attend Miſs Jeſſa, and by her tender watchful care, in ſome reſpect to make atonement for her guilt. I conſented, and when I found that no tidings could be heard of Mrs. Melville, paid the ſervants their wages and diſcharged them, putting an old woman into the houſe, whoſe honeſty her ſimplicity confirmed, and giving her ten guineas, left her to take care of the houſe and furniture, till ſome of the family returned.

The next morning I ſat off for London, with the maid, and her little charge, and have, at their intreaties, ſince conſented to the marriage of her and the guilty, but now repenting Thomas, and agreed to pay them

them according to the care they took of the child. They departed for the country, and are to live at * * * * *, the village where Thomas was brought up, and where he intends following the buſineſs of a gardener. With the utmoſt regret I parted from the ſweet child—but thought it better to ſuffer it to remain with its penitent nurſe, than tear it from her arms, and to place it in thoſe of ſtrangers. I have given orders to my ſteward to viſit her every week, and pay for her board.

I am now going to retire to the melancholy ſeat of my anceſtors in the north of England — and in ſolitude endeavour to conquer a paſſion which has effectually deſtroyed my peace. Should Beaufort fall, I will, if 'tis poſſible to diſcover the wretched Henrietta, make her all the atonement in my power by an offer of my hand; which if ſhe refuſe, I will force her to accept enough to ſupport herſelf and daughter above dependance, and bind myſelf with a ſacred oath never to ſee her more. Should my injured friend fall a victim in his country's cauſe, and his Henrietta remain undiſcovered, I will be a

father

father to their hapleſs orphan. Never ſhall ſhe want a parent; and at my deceaſe ſhe ſhall be heir to my fortune. Should he return, I will ſuffer every inſult which his rage and injuries may load me with, rather than lift my arm againſt his life. With cowardice I may be branded. I once defended a juſt cauſe; but never will a bad one.

What deſolation have I occaſioned! Rapid was the progreſs which a guilty paſſion made in my boſom; ſtrange and fatal may be its effects, whilſt on every ſide the innocent muſt ſuffer for it.

The war is drawing to a concluſion. In a few weeks Beaufort will return. It is ſo long ſince I received his laſt letter, that it would be in vain to write, as he undoubtedly is, ere now, removed two or three hundred miles another way with the army. To time, therefore, I muſt leave the unraveling this ſtory, and explain a myſtery which, when diſcovered, ſhews me to the world the worſt of villains, and throws diſgrace on a family that, till now, had none to brand it with infamy. I acknowlege, Symonds, the juſtneſs of your argu-

arguments; they ſtruck conviction to my ſoul: but had not Henrietta eſcaped, I fear ſhe had fallen a victim to my baſeneſs. I deſerve not the continuance of your friendſhip; but I beg you will indulge me with it. Endeavour to hear what is going forward in the great world, to which I will never return, unleſs they are reſtored to happineſs whom I have ſo cruelly injured: Whilſt the thoughts of thoſe dangers and ſufferings to which I have expoſed the fair Henrietta, will deprive me of enjoying a moment's peace. I ſtill make uſe of every means in my power to diſcover her; but at preſent without ſucceſs. How great muſt the fears of this lovely woman have been to force her even from the arms of her child! What a monſter muſt I appear to her affrighted boſom! I cannot bear to indulge the thought.

Your's,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

AT laſt your miſerable friend has found a place of ſafety. Two heavenly ſtrangers kindly took me in, and beneath their roof I, for a time, ſhall hide my wretchedneſs. But as you undoubtedly are impatient to be acquainted with the motives which could drive me to take the raſh ſtep of quitting my own houſe, and even forſaking my child, I will no longer defer the ſatisfying your curioſity.

I informed you in a ſhort unconnected epiſtle, which you received before my departure from * * * *, that Sir Henry Courtney, after filling my mind with the moſt racking doubts, and alarming fears, reſpecting the conſtancy of my beloved huſband, preſumed to affront me with his abandoned offers. I refuſed them with that indignation and contempt they deſerved; and commanded him to leave the houſe for ever. He took his leave with an affected penitence. I retired to my apartment

ment early in the evening, and providentially heard his vile ſervant tampering with my maid for the deſtruction of her miſtreſs. For a long time the girl reſolutely refuſed his bribes; at length her honeſty gave way to the threats of her lover, for ſuch I now diſcovered that he was, who ſwore, if ſhe refuſed his requeſt, he would never ſee her more.

"Colonel Beaufort, ſaid he, has for ever left your lady. My maſter, young, handſome, and with ten times his fortune, will ſupply his place. Many a woman has a worſe chance. Only admit him into your miſtreſs's chamber to-morrow night; you have nothing farther to do. The lovers will ſoon agree, no doubt; and believe me, Molly, Mrs. Melville will thank you in her heart for the friendly part you acted."

This ſpeech was accompanied by careſſes —and the poor believing girl promiſed to grant his requeſt. A purſe of twenty guineas was then put into her hand, with a promiſe of another as good the enſuing evening. Thus they parted.

What

What was to be done, my Caroline? My own ſervant had agreed to betray me —the others might all have done the ſame before. I had no friend, to whom I could apply in this diſtreſs. Every inhabitant of the village was pre-poſſeſſed againſt me. They would believe no tales but ſuch as were to my diſadvantage. In flight only appeared ſafety. I inſtantly determined to leave my houſe, the habitation my Beaufort had placed me in; and likewiſe to forſake my Jeſſa, the ſweet pledge of our once happy loves. But her innocence would make her friends. Sir Henry could not be an enemy to her. I put two lines, directed to the artful deceiver, into a drawer in my dreſſing-table, in which I deſired him to protect my child till her parent returned. With what agonies I wrote thoſe few words, you may better imagine than I deſcribe. Then putting all the money I had into my pocket, which was in the whole about eighteen guineas, hiding my face as much as poſſible with an old large bonnet, and ſlipping a petticoat, which belonged to a riding-dreſs, over my others, ſtole ſoftly down the ſtairs. In the

the paſſage I luckily found one of the maids old cardinals hanging up; I inſtantly put it over that on my ſhoulders to conceal my black cloak. Thus equipt, with a ſmall bundle of linen tyed up in a handkerchief, I left my houſe—it was about two in the morning, and began to be tolerably light. I knew it would be many hours before I was miſſed. Imagine my ſituation, Caroline, in the middle of the night ſtealing from *my own* dwelling, with the ſecrecy of a thief—forſaking the ſweeteſt infant that nature ever made—without any other companion than my own gloomy thoughts, to attend me through this ſcene of horror—and unacquainted with the way to any one particular place. Luckily, the fear of being purſued, and carried back to ruin, gave wings to my feet, and ere the inhabitants of the farm houſes by which I paſſed had riſen to their daily toil, I was many miles from my own home.

When I had wandered thus for ſeveral hours, taking every bye path that I could ſee, I ſat down beneath the friendly ſhelter of an oak, to reſt myſelf for a few minutes.

nutes. It was then that reflection brought to view the miſery of my preſent ſituation, and that of the paſt: I burſt into tears—A poor woman, at that inſtant paſſing by, took compaſſion on me, and invited me to her cottage, which ſtood a few paces off, to take ſome refreſhment. I accepted the kind offer, and after telling her, in anſwer to her inquiries, that I was going to ſee a friend, but being unuſed to walking was tired and low ſpirited; ſhe pitied me, ſaid I did not look as if I had been uſed to hardſhips; and immediately brought ſome milk and bread, which hunger made me eat with an appetite that rendered it more grateful than the richeſt repaſt I had ever taſted. I offered to pay the good woman for my breakfaſt—but ſhe refuſed with a bluſh—"Though not very rich," ſaid ſhe, "I have, thank God, a plentiful meal for thoſe who ſeem to want it, and to which they are always welcome."

I left the poor cottage with reluctance, and envied the moſt miſerable being that paſſed me. "Is there upon this earth," ſaid my repining ſoul, "ſo compleat a wretch as Henrietta? Not a friend to whom

whom ſhe can fly for protection—Not a habitation beneath whoſe roof ſhe can reſt her weary limbs.—Far diſtant is he, who once loved, once protected her!"

Luckily, none inſulted me as I paſſed along—but ſome addreſſed me with the familiar epithet of *My girl*, enquiring whither I was going, from whence I came, and many other to them trifling queſtions. To all which I returned evaſive anſwers. Thus I wandered, till about ſeven in the evening — when chance, or rather the goodneſs of heaven—conducted me to a pretty dwelling, which was only divided from the road by a pleaſant garden, at the farther end of which, upon a garden ſeat, were placed a venerable pair, the benignity of whoſe looks made me inſtantly determine to addreſs them. Nature was almoſt exhauſted. I ſoftly opened the gate: they were earneſtly converſing, therefore did not obſerve me till I reached them—I threw myſelf on my knees at their feet.

"Save me," I cried — "ſhelter me from a cruel world—I am innocent, though compelled to wear the myſterious appear-

ance

ance of guilt." Life at this inſtant forſook me, and I fell to the earth without motion. Servants were inſtantly called, and every means made uſe of to reſtore me to life. When I recovered, I found myſelf in a neat little parlour, my kind, unknown benefactors hanging over me with the tendereſt ſolicitude. I attempted to apologize for the trouble I had given, and for the abrupt manner in which I intruded myſelf upon them—but was forbidden to ſpeak—A bed was made up for me, to which I was inſtantly carried.—Soon after ſome ſack whey was ſent up by a ſervant, and followed by Mrs. Aſhford, the name of my humane friends. She inſiſted on my not attempting to talk, or think of making excuſes for what ſhe already looked upon as a fortunate event—begged that I would endeavour to compoſe my mind to reſt—then left me.

The tender friendſhip I had met with—the thoughts of being in a place of ſafety—with the wearineſs which terror and fatigue had brought upon me—lulled me to repoſe—and for ten hours ſleep kindly baniſhed ſorrow from my boſom.

Thus

Thus lodged in ſecurity, I will put an end to this epiſtle, but will continue my narrative the firſt opportunity.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXII.

WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Eſq*; *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

SINCE Henrietta is eſcaped, I can forgive you. But what is become of the poor hapleſs wanderer? May ſhe not meet with other Courtneys, who will ſeek to deſtroy that innocence they ought to protect? Without money or friends, where will ſhe find a refuge, or what conſolation can her own forlorn dejected thoughts afford her breaking heart? upon which you have fixed that ſcorpion, jealouſy. Falſe to your friend—cruel and unjuſt to the helpleſs Henrietta—your own thoughts muſt indeed be a ſufficient puniſhment—therefore I will not reproach you. Time, and a future unerring conduct may reſtore you to the place you once held in my heart; but your wonderful ſobriety, I am convinced, aroſe from the want of temptations, rather

rather than from any principle of honour. The obſervation is a juſt one, that a long acquaintance only can diſcovery to us the *real character* of another.

You are become the general topic of converſation. It is ſaid you are gone off with a young beauty; but who, or of what family the lady is, ſtill remains undiſcovered. However, as the tale runs, ſhe was ſuppoſed to be the miſtreſs of ſome friend, whom you were ſo fortunate as to rival. By ſome means your name was diſcovered by the talking neighbours of Mrs. Melville, and from that village aroſe the tale. At the diſtance of a hundred and fifty miles—the news have reached me, and as you were known in this place to be my friend, I was not the *laſt* to hear it. My ſiſter, whoſe favourite you once were, is filled with aſtoniſhment. She lifted her eyes up to my face—"Who would have thought, brother, that Sir Henry Courtney had been ſuch a rake? Well! I ſee there is no truſting to appearances. That London is a horrid place—it ruins half the young fellows of the nation."—"And the young girls too, my Lucy; therefore I do not intend

tend you ſhould go amongſt them."—"Nor do I deſire it," ſhe returned—"but this Courtney, brother—is it not a pity he was ſuch a hypocrite?"—"Do you think it is a pity?" "Indeed I do," ſhe replied with a bluſh; "I could not help thinking favourably of him, becauſe he was ſuch a favourite with you."

The beauty and lovelineſs of my ſweet ſiſter, I once hoped, would have made an impreſſion on your heart. I was piqued at your indifference—and ſhocked at ſeeing the progreſs you made in the eſteem of my ſiſter. I now rejoice at what I then lamented, and never was more ready than at this moment, to adopt this ſentence of Pope, that "Whatever is, is right."

Let the ſincerity with which I have ever treated you, be the teſt of my friendſhip.

When was the flatterer found to be a friend?

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

LETTER XXIII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHEN the morning arrived, I waited with impatience for the ſummons to breakfaſt, that I might make ſome acknowledgment to my preſervers, and rid them of the trouble which I had brought upon them. About eight o'clock I received a meſſage to enquire if I was well enough to go down ſtairs—I immediately followed the ſervant into the parlour, and was welcomed by them with the ſame freedom as if I had been a long acquaintance.

" The manner in which you laſt night addreſſed us, and the lovelineſs of your figure, my young friend," ſaid Mr. Aſhford, " have greatly excited our curioſity, pity and eſteem. If it would not be deemed impertinent, we would, after breakfaſt, be glad to know what ſtrange event brought you into our retired, and obſcure part of the world, alone, and in diſguiſe. Our only buſineſs and pleaſures in this life are to aſſiſt the unfortunate: therefore, if we

can

can be of any ſervice to you, freely may you command us."

What an addreſs was this! Long had I been unaccuſtomed to ſuch benevolence—long had it been ſince the worthy part of my own ſex had deigned to ſmile upon me. My mind was ſoftened by affliction. I burſt into tears—but they were tears of gratitude and joy. "Excuſe me," I cried —"ſuch goodneſs, ſuch tenderneſs, almoſt overpowers me. I will beg a diſh of tea —and then I will unfold every ſecret of my heart and life with the ſame ſincerity as to my Maker."—Breakfaſt was ſoon ended,—and your Henrietta related the hiſtory of her unfortunate life—from its beginning to the preſent period, without even concealing the name of her huſband from them.—They liſtened with attention —wept at the cruel hardſhip of my fate—Long had they been guided by one will. At the ſame inſtant both aroſe to embrace me—

"That heaven directed you to us," ſaid the venerable Mr. Aſhford, "I am thankful—There is ſomething divine that ever attends on truth and innocence; you

ſhall live with us, till fortune wears a kinder aſpect. We once had a daughter —her gentle ſoul was pure as that of angels —ſhe was too good for ſuch a world as this —and therefore her Creator in pity called her to that heaven in which we one day hope to meet again. Weep not, my Eliza; perhaps it kindly ſaved her from experiencing ſuch woes as this young beauty does —whilſt to atone for that natural ſorrow we ſo long have felt, it ſent this lady to ſupply her place."

What did I feel as thus I heard him ſpeak! I threw myſelf at their feet—and when my tears would give me leave, thanked them with that heartfelt gratitude which ſuch generoſity demanded. "How ſhall I find words," ſaid I, "to expreſs the feelings of my ſoul? You are more than friends—more than parents—whilſt Henrietta lives ſhe will endeavour to ſupply the place of your angel daughter—and in ſome meaſure repay the generous protection which you give her. I am an unhappy wretch—but ill fortune can never make me baſe or ungrateful. Thrown off, abandoned by a huſband, who once fondly loved,

loved, and who will ever be beloved whilſt life is given to Henrietta; forced to forſake a poor helpleſs child, whoſe artleſs innocence, and pleaſing infancy had cloſely twined themſelves about my bleeding heart —forſaken by all the world, but by one gentle friend—the world united in tearing my fame to pieces—and for you to take me in; to offer me a refuge and protection—Surely heaven never formed any others hearts like yours."

"Many, I hope, fair ſufferer," ſaid he —"but buſineſs, families, pleaſures, and the cares of life, prevent ſome from exerting that benevolence and candid way of thinking, with which nature at firſt endowed them. For us—we are favoured by providence with enough to ſupport us above dependence, and are verging to the end of life. The death of our child weaned us, in a manner, from the world—but let us not indulge the melancholy of our humours by theſe ſad ſubjects. I can tell you, young lady, my old woman and I ſhall teach you to be chearful."—"I will endeavour to be all you wiſh," ſaid I—"but as to chearfulneſs, I fear it is ba-

niſhed for ever from my boſom. Whilſt I poſſeſſed my Beaufort's heart, the ſhaft of misfortune had been bent in vain—but now it is open to its keeneſt dart."—"And how do you know but you ſtill poſſeſs that huſband's heart?" ſaid Mr. Aſhford. "Sir Henry Courtney was ſo well ſkilled in deceit, that you ought not to credit the tales he told: perhaps they were falſe, meant to forward his own baſe deſigns." "It might be ſo, good Sir—but I never once heard from my huſband ſince he left me—not one line to ſoften the pangs of abſence."—"It is time alone can diſcover the cruel enigma—I am unacquainted with every one with whom you are connected. In fact, I have ſo long lived a life of retirement, that I am a ſtranger in the world I inhabit—the mercileſs hand of time has left me but few friends, and they are almoſt all of them as old faſhioned and as much forgotten as myſelf; —therefore my will is greater than my power to ſerve you—Time is an enemy, and a friend—to that and heaven you muſt truſt your cauſe—Remember, Mrs. Melville, (for by that name I ſtill begged to be

be called) that there is a ſecret providence which often terminates events contrary to human expectation and appearances."—

What thinks my Caroline of my new friends? Angels I may ſurely call them. Victim as I am to misfortune, I think none ever was ſo fortunate in ſuch diſtreſs.—"It is aſtoniſhing," ſaid I one day to Mr. Aſhford, when he expreſſing the parental tenderneſs he began to feel for me, "that you did not ſuſpect my uncommon ſtory to be the invention of art or guilt."—"Were we always to ſuſpect the unfortunate to be guilty," he returned, "what an opinion ſhould we have of half the world?"

Thus tenderly they judge of others, and employ every hour of their lives in promoting the temporal as well as the eternal intereſt of all who make application to them.—Mr. Aſhford has preached twenty years in this village, he is idolized by his pariſhioners, and illneſs alone can prevent his performing his duties.

But oh, Caroline, what balm can be found to heal ſuch woes as mine! Am I never to ſee my Beaufort more? Never again to embrace my Jeſſa, who perhaps is

fallen into the hands of ſtrangers, leſs kind than thoſe who ſheltered her unhappy mother? What ſaid the vile Courtney to my flight? Would you think it? This place, is reckoned fifty miles from that I lived in —but by coming through ſuch bye paths, Mr. Aſhford imagines I muſt have come a much ſhorter way—I know not, only that the way appeared very long and tedious—nor did I ſtop but once, and that only at the poor cottage mentioned in my laſt. I have now been here a fortnight. Write to me, Caroline, tell me what is become of the amiable Cornwall.—It is dangerous to love, my friend—Think, oh think of what I ſuffer—may a happier fate ever attend you, than has done your

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXIV.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

JOY to my ſweet friend on the happy refuge ſhe has found: May heaven reward, both here and ever, the generous pair that took you in when in diſtreſs—

and

and ſaved my Henrietta from the ten thouſand dangers with which ſhe was ſurrounded.—So handſome, ſo gentle, timid, and unacquainted with the world; ſo unable to ſupport hardſhips and fatigue—to become a wanderer—ſet off in the night, alone and unattended!—My boſom was diſtracted for you—I wept inceſſantly. Mr. Cornwall diſcovered my uneaſineſs—he begged to know the cauſe; never had I ſo great an inclination to diſcover your ſecret as at that moment;—but my promiſe, and the fear of your diſpleaſure, reſtrained my tongue. However—I hired a countryman to go over to your houſe, and if poſſible bring ſome tidings of you—he returned without being able to procure any. My uneaſineſs encreaſed—ſo did the importunity of Mr. Cornwall, who has lately been a great deal at our houſe. My father admires him as a companion, and has not the leaſt ſuſpicion of his wiſhing to be more nearly connected with him.—At length I became ſo very unhappy with my apprehenſions on your account, that I ventured to inform him of your name and where you lived; begging he would en-

deavour to gain ſome intelligence of you. —I ſaw him not for ſix days after this converſation: he then entered the apartment where I was ſitting at work—his countenance was unuſually grave. I enquired, with ſome degree of eagerneſs, I believe, What was the matter with him? —"I am very ſorry, Miſs Tylney, to find you are ſo intimately connected with a woman of Mrs. Melville's character, to which undoubtedly you are no ſtranger." "I am well acquainted with my Henrietta," ſaid I:—"too well I know that malevolence, with its ruthleſs tongue, has ſtolen the character of my fair ſuffering friend, in whoſe ſpotleſs boſom every virtue dwells. Appearances, Mr. Cornwall, are often deceitful—I thought you had known enough of the world not to ſuffer your judgment to be led by them alone." "Pardon me, Miſs Tylney, I do not judge in the manner you ſuſpect me to do; I ſaw your uneaſineſs on your friend's account, and determined to alleviate it if in my power?—I therefore ſet off the morning after we laſt parted—for the place in which you had informed me your friend reſided, and arrived

rived at her houſe the following evening. When I rapt at the door, an elderly woman made her appearance—and I begged to ſpeak with Mrs. Melville. "Dear heart, Sir," cried ſhe, "Mrs. Melville is not here."—"Where is ſhe then?" ſaid I. —"Heaven only knows; ſhe went off with Sir Henry Courtney the beginning of laſt week."—I turned from the door with indignation. At the inn, and in the village, I heard the ſame confirmed by every tongue, with the aggravated addition of her having been a kept miſtreſs to ſome man of faſhion, whom it was ſuppoſed Sir Henry had rivalled in his abſence. Indeed, Miſs Tylney, I was ſhocked at hearing this, and would intreat you by all means, to give up any future connection with a woman of ſo bad a character."—"What is your opinion of me, Mr. Cornwall?" ſaid I, with all the calmneſs I could aſſume—"tell me without flattery."—"I believe you to be all that is good and and amiable."—"I have not a virtue, Sir, in my boſom, or an accompliſhment of mind or perſon, but what is ten times ſurpaſt in thoſe of my Henrietta—'twas from her I learnt

learnt to be what I am. There is a hardſhip, a ſingularity in her fate, that is as uncommon as 'tis ſevere—but I am not at liberty to diſcloſe the tale, any more than my ſweet ſuffering friend is to undeceive the world, a world which I am ſure ſhe muſt deſpiſe."—Tears ſtole down my face —Mr. Cornwall was affected. "Since you, Miſs Tilney, are convinced of her worth, it is ſufficient evidence for me—I beg you and your friend ten thouſand pardons for my unjuſt ſuſpicion—the plauſible tale I heard can alone plead in my behalf.—Your generous boſom, Miſs Tylney, ſo nobly ſuſceptible of friendſhip, can it poſſibly be a ſtranger to love?" "Would you have me make confeſſion?" ſaid I, ſmiling.—"No—I was rather inclined to aſk that permiſſion for myſelf."—The converſation of lovers is mere nonſenſe —therefore to own the truth, his readineſs to oblige me and acquit you, becauſe the friend of Caroline, had put me into ſuch good humour, that I gave him liberty to ſpeak, and not only granted him free pardon and abſolution for the daring offence he had committed, but believe I confeſſed the

the having loved a certain perſon much againſt my inclination;—and even diſcovered how much I deſpiſed his hated rival Mr. Danby—Mutual vows then paſt—my boſom was the happier for them. The virtues of Mr. Cornwall juſtify to my own heart its partiality in his favour—indeed they would not juſtify me to my parents and the world for loving a beggar, as my lover is at preſent without the poſſeſſion of a ſingle ſhilling but what his curacies bring him in. We have agreed to conceal our attachment to each other with the greateſt caution, as it would, if diſcovered, be a means of forcing me into the arms of a wretch I deſpiſe.—Some favourable event may take place—we are both young, my ſiſter is quite an Argus—but I hope ſhe will not be able to diſcover my acquaintance with Mr. Cornwall, who has, without deſigning it, rivalled Mr. Danby in her favour—indeed I fear ſhe has cheriſhed hopes of gaining him herſelf. Mr. Cornwall is known to be no favourite with fortune—and the large one ſhe muſt one day poſſeſs, ſhe undoubtedly thinks, would amply compenſate for the want of perſonal

nal charms—But were ſhe poſſeſt of every outward beauty, the deformities of her mind would inſpire him with diſguſt.

Thus am I embarked, my Henrietta, on a ſea, to which, till now, I remained a ſtranger. Will you be the friendly pilot to guard me from thoſe rocks and ſands on which I may otherwiſe be loſt?—As to a private marriage, I will never think of it. Sooner would I conſent to be for ever parted from my lover. No, Henrietta—the hardſhips it has brought on you are ſo many, and ſo ſevere, that I would wiſh them not only to be a warning to me, but to all our ſex.—

I have complied with your requeſt in exactly informing you how matters ſtand—Now let me entreat you would endeavour to be eaſy—credit not the tales of that baſe defamer, that falſe friend, Sir Henry Courtney. Undoubtedly they were only meant to aſſiſt him in his ſchemes. That you have not heard from colonel Beaufort, is, I own, ſurpriſing—are you certain he did not write? Yet Courtney durſt not withhold his letters. The colonel's regiment has been every day expect-

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ed to land in England, for ſome time paſt —ſurely you will then hear from him—he may even now be in England;—if ſo, no doubt but you will ſoon be reſtored to him and happineſs.

Write to me, Henrietta, tell me you are well, doubt not but your Jeſſa is taken care of; how abandoned to every feeling of humanity muſt be that wretch who could hurt, or refuſe to protect ſo ſweet an infant!—Her innocence too *muſt* be the care of a watchful providence.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

RETTER XXV.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

THE field of calumny is extenſive—'tis a fertile ſoil. For me, I care not as to the opinion of the world—that anxiety has long been ended. I bear within me the witneſs of my innocence—*that* would ſupport me, Caroline, though princes were to pronounce me guilty. I even think it would, though my Beaufort, the man my ſoul loves better than its exiſtence, were

to

to condemn me—but from that fate may heaven defend me!—'Tis a thought, which, 'till this moment, never found entrance to my boſom—ſurely it has not reaſon for its foundation.—Did I ſay I could ſupport the being thought guilty by my huſband? Vain boaſter that I am: Oh, Caroline, there's madneſs in the thought—I dare not look that way.

I have now been ſeven weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford—every day brings with it ſome proof of their encreaſing tenderneſs—yet ſtill I am the child of diſappointment. About a fortnight ſince I mentioned my little girl.—With a mother's partial fondneſs repeated ſome tender tales, and lamented, with a flood of tears, the cruel neceſſity I was under of leaving her behind. The next day Mr. Aſhford, unknown to me, ſent a countryman to my forſaken habitation, to learn ſome tidings of her—and if it were poſſible, diſcover with whom ſhe was placed—to pay whatever was demanded for her board, and bring her with him. I knew not of this additional obligation till the meſſenger returned, and was then acquainted with what had paſt. An old

old woman occupied my houſe, as you before informed me; ſhe was placed here, ſhe ſaid, to take care of the furniture; but could give no intelligence of the child, or ſend me any cloaths, as ſhe had no right to part with what did not belong to her. She told the man that a ſervant, and two gentlemen, had been there before to enquire for Mrs. Melville—and that on telling the laſt that I was gone off with Sir Henry Courtney—he raged and ſwore in ſuch a manner as almoſt frightened her out of her ſenſes—and on going away, had commanded her not to leave the houſe, or ſuffer any thing to be made away with, and ſhe ſhould be well rewarded for her honeſty. Who could this be, my Caroline? Surely no other than the vile Sir Henry.—Perhaps he expected to find me returned to my habitation, and the diſappointment, added to the report which prevailed, threw him into ſuch a rage. This account has determined me to remain ſtill more concealed; I ſhall now be afraid even to indulge myſelf with a walk; who knows, but he may take it into his head to ſearch for me around the country? How-

However, if that ſhould be the caſe—he will hardly think of finding me here. Obſcure and few are the peaceful happy inhabitants of this almoſt unfrequented village —which lies at a conſiderable diſtance from any great road.—But what is become of my child? Pardon me, Caroline, for tormenting you with a mother's tender fears.

The woman's not ſending any cloaths was a proof of her honeſty: the man neither told her from whence he came, or who ſent him—only that they were for Mrs. Melville. With ſome reaſon ſhe might conclude he was a cheat.—Mrs. Aſhford kindly offered me any of her cloaths: I accepted a black ſilk night gown, have ſince made ſome trifling purchaſes, and have likewiſe received ſeveral preſents from them. As the Brunſwick I had on when I left my houſe was almoſt new, I want no addition to my wardrobe — therefore excuſe me, my Caroline, for returning you the bill which you ſo kindly encloſed in your laſt, but which you delicately avoided mentioning in your letter—I am ſtill very rich—ten guineas remain untouched. Henrietta

rietta muſt be much poorer, ere ſhe could conſent to deprive her generous friend of ſo conſiderable a part of her allowance.

May you, my Caroline, have a more fortunate, and more experienced guide than your ſuffering friend, to conduct you through the trying labyrinths of life! You have a monitor in your own boſom, that will ever lead you to what is right.—May the loves of Tylney and of Cornwall remain conſtant and unſhaken by time, and the various changes it produces, if in that love they are to find happineſs.—May conſenting parents and a ſmiling world, aſſiſt in crowning all your hours with delight! I do not approve of carrying on clandeſtine acquaintances, any more than of private marriages. Think how I have ſuffered in the opinions of the world—as well as in my own boſom—perhaps have pulled down ruin on the man I love—But can ſo faulty a creature preſume to adviſe the unerring? The praiſes beſtowed by the friend we love muſt be grateful, it will almoſt make us vain; I wiſh to deſerve them more.

The

The chearfulneſs of Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford ſerves to keep up my ſpirits. A placid temper greatly helps to ſecure people from many of the infirmities of life. At the age of ſeventy, it is aſtoniſhing to ſee the health which this venerable pair ſtill enjoy. We paſs our time in a manner quite pleaſing to me—No other company break in upon us, except now and then the wife of an honeſt farmer. We read, walk, and work by turns; Mr. Aſhford often reads to us on entertaining as well as on religious ſubjects—but there is a ſtriking ſolemnity in his manner of reading the latter that adds grandeur and even greater importance to the ſubject.—The Sundays are paſt in the ſame rational manner, as every other day—Mr. Aſhford, though very obſerving of every religious duty, is far from being ſevere in his opinions; all innocent amuſements he encourages; for he is entirely a ſtranger to that ill-nature and narrowneſs of thinking, which are too often the companions of the aged.

Adieu, my Caroline; join with me in returning thanks to heaven for giving ſuch friends to HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

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LETTER XXVI.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

CRUEL, unkind Henrietta! What a pleaſure did you deprive me of by refuſing to accept the ſmall proof which my friendſhip offered!—Inadequate was it to the wiſhes which actuated my heart. I would ſhare with you whatever I poſſeſs, were it in my power—but even the little which I could, you refuſe; however, I ſhall reſerve it for you, ſhould fortune ſtill continue to deny you a more liberal indulgence of her favours.—Why do not you write oftener? It is now a month ſince I heard from you laſt—and my anxious heart ſighs to be conſtantly informed of your welfare. —Excuſe me, Henrietta, for I have ventured to unfold to Mr. Cornwall, enough of your ſad ſtory to baniſh every unfavourable idea of you from his boſom, and to make him your friend.

The name of your huſband ſhall never paſs my lips till your marriage is diſcovered — therefore ſet your heart at reſt on that

that account. You have painted your pleaſing retreat in ſuch romantic, flattering colours, that I often wiſh I could pay you a viſit *en paſſant*, and become acquainted with the amiable pair, who in ſo generous and uncommon a manner ſupply the place of parents, and of every other endearing relation to my Henrietta.—How would their feeling and benevolent hearts have exulted, could they have reſtored your Jeſſa to your arms! On her account I conjure you to be eaſy; depend upon it, ſhe is in a place of ſafety.

Things here are in the ſtrangeſt train imaginable. My ſiſter Lucy has fallen ſeriouſly in love with Mr. Cornwall, my parents ſee her attachment, and do not appear to diſcourage it.—They are not inſenſible that the unhappy deformities of her mind and perſon will prevent her marrying upon an equality; and therefore I ſuppoſe, to hinder her ever forming an imprudent attachment, would gladly give her to the arms of a worthy man. — Mr. Cornwall has a ſweetneſs in his temper that will always prevent his treating any one with unpoliteneſs or diſlike; he ſees her

partiality

partiality in his favour, and though he does not encourage, his manly pity and polite notice give her hopes that ſhe is not indifferent to him.—This has put her into the higheſt good-humour, and not in the leaſt ſuſpecting that there is any connection between me and her favourite, ſhe has for ſome days ceaſed to torment me on Mr. Danby's account. My parents are ſtill giving him all the encouragement in their power, and notwithſtanding they are poſſeſſed of a fortune of forty thouſand pounds, with only two daughters to beſtow it upon, they would ſacrifice the happineſs of their favourite—by marrying her to the greateſt booby in nature—becauſe he is maſter of an eſtate of eleven thouſand *per annum*; and to add to his worth, is next heir to a title. —Would you think it, Henrietta? I overheard that wretch Danby a few nights ſince tell my ſiſter—" that he would marry me with joy the following morning—though I was dragged to the altar, and my hand given to him by force. When once married, he would ſoon cure me of whining, and teach me to love him." To this ſpeech my ſiſter returned a laugh of approbation.

—Are

—Are they not a fit match for each other?—Mr. Cornwall has ſeveral times ventured to hint his diſapprobation, and that of every generous mind, to the cruelty of forced marriages; endeavoured to impreſs the force of what he ſaid, by mentioning the fatal conſequences which too often attend them. "From lips like his, what precepts fail to move?" At the time they were employed in my behalf, they had even an effect on the mind of my father—but when avarice takes poſſeſſion of the heart, it cloſes it againſt every noble, every tender feeling. — 'Tis aſtoniſhing to me that people raiſed from dependence to affluence ſhould become ſordid—but ſo it frequently happens. My father had, when he in a manner depended on his own induſtry for ſubſiſtence, the moſt generous way of thinking—his heart, his purſe were ever open to a friend—he had no ambition to ſee his children great, but happy. The various changes of the human mind muſt proceed from a ſource that only he who formed them can ever explain. My mother, accuſtomed to think my father always in the right, refuſes to liſten to any of my complaints, treats Mr.

Mr. Danby with the moſt diſtinguiſhing attention, and entreats me to make them all happy by giving him my hand. "One would think," ſaid I, yeſterday, when ſhe was urging me in the above manner, "that you imagine the ſacrificing one's own happineſs to the humours of other people, was a matter of little conſequence. Since you are ſo deſirous of having Mr. Danby for a ſon-in-law, marry my ſiſter Lucy to him." "How can you talk ſo, Caroline? You know your ſiſter is in love with Mr. Cornwall." "And pray, madam, have not as great a right to the liberty of making a free choice as Lucy?" -- No—your father has choſe to make one for you—he always expected you would make your fortune, and he will not ſuffer your perverſeneſs to diſappoint his hopes." — How provoking was all this—I cried for vexation—and in the evening walked out to ſpeak to a young lady, who lives about a quarter of a mile from our houſe—There I unexpectedly met with my lover, who had accompanied the gentleman and lady he boards with, on a viſit to my friend.-- He ſaw I was uneaſy, and took an opportunity to enquire the

cauſe.—Too ſoon was it explained, he became as grave as myſelf; and Miſs Meadows, laughing, told me that my coming had made Mr. Cornwall dull, which was directly contrary to the effect my charms uſually had on the minds of the gentlemen. —"Whilſt ſome are revived by the dazzling rays of the ſun," ſaid he, "others may be fainting beneath the power of its beams.—When I ſee a being ſuperior to myſelf, it awes me into a ſerious reflection on my own littleneſs."—"Mighty ſmart, humble, and ſentimental," ſaid ſhe, laughing—"however, I am glad my obſervation provoked you to ſay ſuch fine things in excuſe for your dulneſs—but Miſs Caroline is ſo uſed to receive compliments and adoration from the enamoured Mr. Danby, that it takes the novelty and charms from the compliments of other men." The mentioning of that hated name at once determined me to put an end to my viſit. I excuſed myſelf by ſaying, "I called her to walk—but finding ſhe was engaged would return, and aſk my ſiſter to favour me with her company." Mr. Cornwall would inſiſt upon attending me home. When we were got

ſome

ſome diſtance from the houſe we had left, he prevailed on me not to go home immediately, but to lengthen my walk. I complied, and notwithſtanding the reaſon we had to lament the preſent unfavourable aſpect of affairs, I never experienced a more heartfelt delight than in this ſhort ſtolen ramble with the man I loved.—Ambition, and all the alluring power of greatneſs, appeared diſguſting or vaniſhed into nothing—mere phantoms all.—

To do Mr. Cornwall juſtice, he has, with the becoming gravity of his profeſſion, the politeneſs and ſpirit of the ſoldier, the ſenſe of the ſtudent, the eaſe of the man of faſhion; the utmoſt livelineſs of wit, with the trueſt good-nature; to which are joined the charity and religion of a chriſtian, with a benevolence of heart, that will ever procure him happineſs in the next world as it does in this.—He is too good to be vain, too great to be proud—and though poor, too generous to be mean. He never reflects on the difference which fortune has made between us, without being wounded by the compariſon—a thouſand times has he lamented his own want of fortune, and

the largeneſs of mine. He wiſhes me to be his—but would ſhudder at the thought of my marrying ſuch a poor beggar, without the approbation of my friends—he has even hinted that if I ever meet with any other man, that by marrying I ſhould oblige my friends, and ſecure happineſs to myſelf, that he would inſtantly remove to ſome obſcure retreat, and never appear to interrupt my peace. Such, my Henrietta, is the real character of Mr. Cornwall. If my attachment wants any farther excuſe, I have none to make,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXVII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHY will you reproach me, Caroline, for not writing oftener, when my letters are ſo dull and ſtupid that they muſt be more diſagreeable than pleaſing even to thee, an indulgent friend? I have nothing elſe to fill them with but a repetition of paſt misfortunes, and fruitleſs complaints. In a manner ſecluded from the world,

world, and fond of brooding over my own ſorrows, nothing of an entertaining nature can flow from my pen.

The loſs of thoſe we love, is ſurely the greateſt trial human nature has to encounter. Even the leſſons of wiſdom which I ſo frequently hear from Mr. Aſhford, are often inſufficient to reſtore my mind to any degree of ſerenity. Colonel Beaufort, I begin to think, has thrown me off for ever. —and who will be found to vindicate, and reſtore to peace the injured Henrietta? I ſometimes ſit, and in review traverſe through every ſcene of my paſt life.—Indeed I cannot reflect with any pleaſure, but on thoſe happy days of early youth which were paſt with you at the boarding-ſchool, in which our parents had luckily placed us together —Where our young hearts were firſt united in the ſacred bond of friendſhip, — and which ſecured me a conſolation through ſucceeding years of anguiſh.—I mean the generous friendſhip of my Caroline.

Love is the child of caprice—friendſhip the offſpring of reaſon and virtue—ſenſibility the nurſe. — Its ties are ſtronger and more noble than thoſe of nature—becauſe

formed by an exact ſimilarity of ſentiment, inclination and free choice.

In a converſation that paſſed a few days ſince, between me and Mr. Aſhford, I was lamenting the cruel uncertainty of all our enjoyments on earth—our lives, our friends lives, and what is of equal value, the continuance of their love, endearments and protection, all hang upon the ſame fickle and uncertain thread.—Had we no other trial, that alone would rob us of every real enjoyment.

"That enemy, as you name uncertainty, my child," he returned, "is in reality our beſt friend—it is that alone which muſt give the mind reſolution to prepare for that change which muſt at length arrive—for be aſſured, Mrs. Melville, did we know the final period in which our favourite enjoyments, or in which the mortal life of our friends or ourſelves were to terminate, our minds would be conſtantly fixt on that ſolemn hour and by ſo doing we ſhould loſe our reliſh for every neceſſary amuſement, and become incapable of performing thoſe duties and employments which nature has aſſigned us to fulfil—Whilſt uncertainty will often

often lead our hopes beyond that era, from which mortality ſo often ſhrinks affrighted —but which, whether near or far diſtant, religion, innocence, and prudence, with a ſmiling train of virtues, will lead Mrs. Melville through every change of fortune to reflect on without terror or regret."—I bent my knee in thankful gratitude to my venerable inſtructor—told him he had ſent conviction to my heart.—

My health is at this time in a very unpromiſing way. The continual agitation of my ſpirits is too great for my weak frame to ſupport—my tender watchful friends ſee the alteration with ſorrow. Air and moderate exerciſe have been ſtrongly recommended to me. I frequently ride out behind the ſervant—have been ſeveral times at *******, a market town within ſeven miles of Mr. Aſhford's: it is a lively genteel place — a number of ſtrangers are often paſſing through it in their way to London. The apothecary, who attended me a few times in the beginning of my indiſpoſition, or rather decline, but who was too honeſt to offer phyſic for a diſtempered mind, has a very agreeable woman for a wife—I have

at his requeſt called upon her, and we ſpent ſeveral chearful hours together — ſhe has likewiſe been twice at Mr. Aſhford's, who is pleaſed that I have met with ſo accompliſhed a female for an acquaintance. She keeps a vaſt deal of company; for by her account, there is a very large and genteel neighbourhood round ******, there are alſo very good aſſemblies. She has much entreated me to accompany her to the next —but were I furniſhed with a dreſs, I could not think of going into any public company with ſuch a burthen at my heart.—

The portrait you have drawn of your lover, my Caroline, is a very pleaſing, and I hope not a flattering one. May you, on a longer acquaintance, find every part of it true. He already ſhares with you in my friendſhip—yet I tremble for you both in your preſent ſituation, each of you ſuch a rival to contend with—I wonder not at your diſlike to Danby — his character is contemptible, and baſe: after knowing the averſion you have for him, his only inducement to wiſh you his, muſt be to make you miſerable. I am incapable at this time of offering you any advice — I know not how

how I ſhould act were I ſituated as you are—but your own prudence, and the honour and goodneſs of your lover, will lead you through an undeviating path.

No news yet of Colonel Beaufort; undoubtedly he has been many weeks in England. Yet I dare not write to him. As I know of no other way to get a letter conveyed to his hand, but by directing it to him at his father's country ſeat, ſhould he open it—never would he pardon the offence, or Beaufort forgive my imprudence. Silence, and a patient ſubmiſſion to my fate, is all that is left

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXVIII.

Sir HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Eſq.*

RETIREMENT ſuits not a guilty conſcience. I can fly from the world, but cannot from myſelf. The ſuffering, injured Henrietta is continually preſented to my diſturbed imagination, in every diſtreſſing, dangerous ſituation. I muſt leave this place. Will you take me in,

my friend? Will you aſſiſt me in my endeavours to diſcover the hapleſs fair one, that I may make all the atonement in my power, by reſtoring her to a huſband's arms? The virtues of your blooming ſiſter made a deep impreſſion on my mind, though they did not ſubdue my heart. The manner in which you mentioned her in your laſt letter, has occaſioned a ſtrange revolution in my boſom. A thouſand little circumſtances did it bring to remembrance. I have, it is true, behaved unworthily; I planned the ruin of the beſt of women; but her prudence ſaved me from never-ending wretchedneſs—I will not think of peace till it is reſtored to thoſe from whom I baſely ſtole it: except in this inſtance, Symonds, I never was unworthy the name of friend—Fear not for your ſiſter; I will, without reſerve, unfold the whole infamous tale before her; if ſhe once had a partiality in my favour, it will baniſh it forever. Falſe to my friend,—falſe to Henrietta,—unjuſt to myſelf—I deſerve not to be happy. From that miſerable *ſelf*, I call upon you now to ſave me.

What

What has ſerved to encreaſe the torments of my own guilty conſcience, is a melancholy circumſtance which has lately happened in this part of the world, occaſioned by a wretch who is in ſome reſpects more blameable than even I was, when led away by the unjuſt deluſive paſſion, which made me form the horrid plan to ruin Mrs. Beaufort—for ſurely to ruin, and then abandon the hapleſs injured ſufferer to all the horrors of reflection and deſpair, are aggravated crimes that would even chill with terror a ſavage boſom.

Miſs Emma Goodwin, the natural daughter of an officer, was left by her father to the care of a ruined and unhappy mother—who had fallen a victim to his arts—and the ſpecious vows he made of honour and marriage. Too ſoon was ſhe convinced of his baſeneſs, and all the miſery of her fate; ſhe retired with her infant daughter to the houſe of a ſiſter who now lives in a village a few miles from this place, there ſhe lingered out a few melancholy months—and then left a world wherein ſhe had drank ſo deeply of the bitter cup of dark misfortune. Before ſhe

died,

died, ſhe ſtrongly recommended the care of her darling Emma to her ſiſter, who promiſed to comply with this her laſt requeſt.

Theſe two ſiſters had been brought up rather beyond the manner which the lower rank of females uſually are, being indebted to a godmother, who, on account of their being twins, had anſwered for them both—and generouſly gave them a good education. Mrs. Spilman, the name of the ſurviving ſiſter, to the beſt of her power, acquitted herſelf of the promiſe ſhe had made; but her poverty, and the having a bad huſband, diſabled her from being the friend ſhe wiſhed to be to the little Emma—whom ſhe ſoon loved with the ſame fondneſs as if ſhe had been a child of her own. —

The virtues and various accompliſhments of this young beauty, ſoon made her an object of general obſervation—ſhe was mentioned in all companies, as the queen of the village ſhe inhabited—whilſt her modeſty, ſweetneſs, and prudent conduct made her appear as a ſuperior kind of being to the people ſhe was thrown amongſt

— Unfortu-

—Unfortunately for her—ſhe was one day painted in ſuch flattering colours before Sir John Loveleſs, that it raiſed in him a ſtrong deſire to ſee her. Diſguiſed in the livery of one of his ſervants, he eaſily became acquainted with the worthleſs Spilman, and by him was conducted to his cottage — The moment he ſaw the blooming unſuſpecting Emma, he determined her ruin; for to marry ſo poor, ſo mean a girl, was a thought his haughty ſoul could not bear. The equality which there *appeared* in their ſituations baniſhed all that caution and reſerve which would have taken place had they known the rank of their gueſt. He appeared ſuch a good-natured, ſober, good young man, that he was ſoon received by Mrs. Spilman and her niece as a welcome viſiter, and made a ſtrong impreſſion on the heart of the unfortunate Emma — When he found what a favourite he was with the aunt, and the power he had gained over the heart of the niece, he diſcovered himſelf to them, and made no ſcruple of declaring the violence of his paſſion. He then told an artful tale of a mother he had, who was too proud to

conſent

conſent to his entring into an alliance with one who had no fortune, and as his own greatly depended on her humour, ſaid, he durſt not diſoblige her by marrying contrary to her will—but that at her death, he would inſtantly convince them of the ſincerity of his paſſion, by making the charming Emma his wife. The ſeeming candour and truth with which all this was ſpoken, the dazzling proſpect which ſeemed to open before them, and what was ſtill more powerful, the love which the artleſs Emma felt for Sir John, baniſhed every fear, and the diſguiſe which he at firſt made choice of to gain admittance and conceal his viſits from the world, he ſtill continued to wear. This point gained, he had whatever opportunities he wiſhed to converſe with the youthful innocent maid: often did ſhe lament with tears the difference which fortune had made between them, and wiſhed her lover had been only what he appeared to be. Doomed, like her unhappy mother, to feel the utmoſt violence of that dangerous paſſion, love, ſhe even borrowed her very ſmiles from the man who had ſo artfully planned her

her ruin, and on whoſe heart all her innocence and blooming ſweetneſs made no other impreſſion than to urge him to the completion of his baſe deſigns—Too ſoon he ſucceeded, and triumphed over the honour of the really virtuous Emma.—When his paſſion began to abate, with an unfeeling levity of heart, he left *****, and ſoon after England, with a deſign to make the grand tour—and that too without even taking leave of, or making any proviſion for the poor ſufferer, who had, with a burſting heart, informed him of her being with child. Barbarous was the ſpoiler of ſo much innocence, but ſtill more cruel was it to forſake her at ſuch a miſerable period, without ſecuring her from the wounding ſting of infamous, chearleſs poverty.—Emma, though ſhe ſo unfortunately inherited her mother's frailty, had, with a proper ſenſe of the charms of virtue, juſt notions of honour, and ſome pride—When ſhe found herſelf ſo cruelly abandoned, a phrenzy ſeized her, and ſhe made confeſſion to all around of her dreadful ſituation—ſhe, who was once as blooming as the vernal ſpring,

and

and as gentle too, became a very fury: whilſt the effects of her diſtraction often diſcovered itſelf in various affecting ſhapes. At her intervals of reaſon, when her aunt, indeed her only friend, uſed to endeavour to ſooth her ſorrows, ſhe would claſp her arms around her—declare ſhe could not live without her Loveleſs, without honour, an object of univerſal deteſtation—" I am a victim to cruelty and baſeneſs, would ſhe cry, too poor to bribe the hand of juſtice--the offſpring of guilt, ſorrow and misfortune. Vain are all your cruel kind endeavours to preſerve me; ſoon will my ſpirit force its way to ſome other world—in ſpite of every art made uſe of to withhold it—How ready, how thankful ought ſuch a wretch as I to be for that refuge, that peaceful aſylum the grave—which alone can free me from the ſharp ſtings of injured diſappointed love, and the injuſtice of mankind!"

The miſery which thoſe muſt feel who are endued with ſentiments above their ſituation—can by ſuch only be deſcribed —To complete this ſhocking tragedy, this unhappy girl took an opportunity to eſcape the

the watchful tenderneſs of her aunt, when ſhe was employed about ſome of her domeſtic affairs, and running to a river which was not far diſtant from their houſe —threw herſelf in, and unfortunately no aſſiſtance was near to ſave her from the fatal effects of her own deſpair. In the evening her body was found, and conveyed to her inconſolable adopted parent—who is now deprived of every joy during the ſhort remnant of her life.

To bear our trials with fortitude, is greater than to die—but this poor innocent was unable to acquire a fortitude equal to her trials—Providence to her had been cruelly bountiful; it had given her the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility; and by ſo doing ſhe was the more exquiſitely miſerable.—By chance I rode through the village as they were carrying the youthful victim to her grave: all the young men and maidens, with dejected countenances, attended for the laſt time their fair companion—they had decorated the coffin with flowers—herſelf once a fairer flower than thoſe they threw around.—

Could

Could Sir John Loveleſs have been a witneſs to this ſcene, it would have found its way to his heart. The uncommon ſolemnity with which this funeral was attended—the number, and the general grief of its numerous followers firſt attracted my attention. I enquired who it was they were ſo carefully, and with ſuch apparent concern conveying to their laſt home—and ſoon learnt the above tale. I have ordered a monument to be put up for the poor departed ſufferer. But to deſcribe what I felt during the recital of her ſad ſtory, is not poſſible; gratefully did I return thanks to heaven for ſending conviction to my ſoul—and that I had never drank ſo deep of the poiſoned cup of unlawful pleaſure, as the too thoughtleſs, abandoned Loveleſs had done.—I will not wait an anſwer to this letter, leſt it ſhould contain a refuſal of my requeſt, but be with you a few days after it has reached your hand.

HENRY COURTNEY.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

HOW much did your laſt letter, my friend, alarm me? Your indiſpoſition has filled the anxious boſom of your Caroline with a preſaging terror—I know you muſt be ill, or you would not have complained—For heaven's ſake, my Henrietta, be careful of yourſelf: conſider the happineſs of many depend on you—think not too much of the preſent face of affairs; it is too true they wear but an unpromiſing aſpect; but how ſoon may they be changed! My own ſituation is become worſe, more diſagreeable than ever—but I can hardly beſtow a thought upon it, ſince the receipt of your laſt letter. May heaven ſhower down the choiceſt of its bleſſings on the generous Aſhfords, for their tender care of the dear ſiſter of my heart. May ſorrow ever remain a ſtranger to them here!—Their own virtues will, no doubt, procure them a very diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed place in that heaven which few like them deſerve.—

Write to me, Henrietta — eaſe this wounding ſuſpence — tell me you are better. My mind at this moment feels your every grief.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXX.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHY would my Caroline alarm herſelf with ſuch groundleſs apprehenſions? I am not well, it is true—Yet in no danger of loſing that life, on which my gentle friend ſets ſo much value.—The worm of ſorrow has driven the roſes from my cheek: it has preyed upon my heart. The body will ſympathize with the mind:—but grief is an enemy that will wound long before it deſtroys; therefore be convinced you have nothing to fear on my account—Self preſervation is the firſt law of nature:—guided by that truth, can you doubt of my utmoſt endeavours to preſerve health? though not poſſeſſed of an

an equal portion of happineſs which makes ſo many the more eagerly ſigh for that bleſſing which alone can enable them to enjoy every other.—Mrs. Aſhford was a witneſs to the invitation which Mrs. Freeland gave me to accompany her to the next aſſembly. This afternoon, as we ſat at tea, a piece of black ſilk was brought into the room—She aroſe, and preſenting it to me, deſired I would do her the favour to accept it, and have it made up directly, that I might have it in my power to comply with the requeſt of my new acquaintance. "Your preſent ſituation, my dear child," ſaid ſhe, "requires amuſement, therefore I muſt inſiſt on being obliged. I heard you once ſay that you would never wear any dreſs but black, till the return of your huſband, or I would with pleaſure have made a more lively choice for you."

My heart is bending beneath a weight of obligations, ſuch as I think were never conferred before. Can I have a wiſh in oppoſition to theirs?—No, my Caroline, indeed I could not; the mantua maker is therefore ſet to work, and I am, the latter end of next week, to make my appearance.

Mr.

Mr. Aſhford will attend me, if his health will permit him. He ſays our unexpected appearance will create as much ſurprize, as ever a young lady's did, attended by an old man. —

Your laſt letter, my friend, awakened my impatience, and greatly excited my curioſity to know what has happened amongſt you. If there is an alteration, I hope it will ſoon produce one more pleaſing. Your ſiſter was never a favourite with me; but diſappointed love carries ſuch pangs with it, that I would not wiſh my moſt cruel enemy to feel them.—You may in return ſay, that ſhe had never any hopes to build upon, and that if people court diſappointments, they ought to abide by the conſequence. Very true, my Caroline; but people often love, and act contrary to reaſon—However, if we may judge from the diſpoſition of your ſiſter, ſhe is one that does not poſſeſs the moſt ſuſceptible of hearts, therefore ſhe may be able to ſurvive a diſappointment of the tender kind; but heaven protect you and Mr. Cornwall from being the objects of her revenge: therefore, if ſhe has diſcovered

vered your mutual attachment, be upon your guard, my Caroline—a revengeful diſappointed woman is an enemy to be greatly feared—Adieu, be at eaſe on my account — indeed you have nothing to fear.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXI.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

I Now ſit down to perform the promiſe I made you.—Imperfectly ſhall I acquit myſelf of that promiſe. A variety of diſtracting paſſions have a falſe ungrateful woman, and deceitful friend, planted round my ſoul — but I will have revenge, to earth's remoteſt bounds will I purſue the curſt perfidious pair.

You were a witneſs to the many agonizing torments I ſuffered during my ſhort abſence from England. What was the tempeſt of war to that I felt within my boſom!—You endeavoured to lighten the heavy burthen which you ſaw was fixed upon my mind—you kindly ſolicited my friendſhip—Unable to find conſolation, I

for

for a time ſhunned your ſociety; you perſiſted and conquered.—I made you the conſident of a tale that once appeared ſo pleaſing. You ſaw the many letters I wrote; to none of which did I ever receive an anſwer, except one alarming one, which added to my grief, anxiety, and ſuſpence. I had no friend to whom I could apply for information—None to whom I dare diſcloſe my imprudent marriage. Fortune, as if in pity to my impatience, put an end to the war ſooner than was expected. We landed in England. Juſt after I parted from you, Stanmore, my father met me, and with a fondneſs which I never found before, bade me welcome to my native country—complained of the miſery he had ſuffered on my account, and vowed never to expoſe his darling ſon again to the dangers of war. Such a reception was as pleaſing as it was unexpected. I never till that inſtant had received ſuch ſtriking proofs of his regard. Naturally haughty and auſtere, he had ever kept his children at too great a diſtance to make them friends. At his requeſt I accompanied him to ****,

where

where he, in an agony of paſſion, informed me, that my brother George had diſpleaſed him by running him ſome thouſands in debt, and he had ſent him a voyage to the Eaſt Indies—That he had lately diſcovered my ſiſter carried on an acquaintance with a Captain of marines, for which offence he had ſent her to a ſeat he has in Derbyſhire, where he had ordered her to be cloſely confined.—"In you, my ſon," he continued, "are placed all my hopes. I have, during your abſence, provided a proper match for you, which I muſt inſiſt on your accepting—'tis the only daughter of Lord G——, an agreeable young lady.—She is of noble extraction, has a large fortune, and an unexceptionable character." I was like one thunder-ſtruck with this intelligence, and could not ſpeak.—"What! are you ſilent," ſaid he, "and like the reſt determined to counter-act and deſtroy every ſcheme which would promote your own happineſs as well as mine! Sure I am the moſt miſerable of fathers.—However, Sir, unleſs you comply with my requeſt, you are no more my ſon. I give you ten days

to conſider of it—Weigh well your determination. I am not an old man, and if I find you as great a fool as your brother and ſiſter have been, I will marry again, and leave every ſhilling I have to ſtrangers." He left the room.

For ſome minutes I remained like one deprived of ſenſe. Such a ſudden change —ſuch an arbitrary parent—compelled to marry whilſt my hand and heart were the property of another—already a huſband and a father, my Henrietta perhaps dying, falſe or injured.—I rung the bell—a ſervant appeared, and I ordered him to ſaddle my horſe immediately.—When it was ready, I mounted him, and inſtantly ſat off for this place.

But, Oh! Stanmore, what a ſcene preſented itſelf!—On alighting at the door of that houſe which I ſo often have entered with delight, I was ſurpriſed at ſeeing all the ſhutters cloſed, and every thing wear the appearance of melancholy. I rapt impatiently at the door—an elderly woman made her appearance. I enquired for Mrs. Melville.

"Lord,

"Lord, Sir, cried ſhe, Mrs. Melville has been gone from this houſe many months."—"Gone," cried I, ſcarce able to ſupport myſelf, "where is ſhe gone, where is her little girl?"—"Why ſhe went off with a very fine gentleman—a Sir Henry Courtney—and took her child with her, I ſuppoſe. He put me in here, and deſired me to take care of every thing, which I am ſure I will do, for he paid me nobly for my trouble. God bleſs his ſweet face, I don't wonder the lady liked him better than ſhe did her huſband, who, ſome ſay, went away and left her, but others will tell you ſhe was never married at all, and if ſo, ſhe was in the right of it to pleaſe herſelf, you know."

—This was ſo heavy, ſo unexpected a ſtroke, that I was not able to bear it—had not the old woman ſupported me, I muſt have ſunk to the floor. "Bleſs us all! What is the matter!" cried ſhe, "Why you ſeem very ill.—You are Mrs. Melville's brother, I ſuppoſe. But if ſo, your ſiſter wants for nothing."—"I am the unhappy maſter of this houſe," ſaid I; "therefore prepare me a bed directly."

She ſeemed to doubt my ſincerity. — "What I tell you is fact, good woman— as a proof of which I can name almoſt every piece of furniture in the room which I would have you prepare for my reception." I did ſo, and her doubts at once ſubſided. But think, my friead, of the diſtraction which took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. I raved at, and curſt all the perfidious ſex. I threw myſelf on the bed on which I had ſo often embraced my Henrietta — and even melted into tears. I wandered through every apartment, calling upon the name of my falſe wife—and even imagined I heard her foot-ſteps, followed, as they ſometimes uſed to be, by our little Jeſſa. Was it not enough, Stanmore, to rob me of my wife? muſt I likewiſe be deprived of my child?

In this manner paſt the night. The next morning I returned to London; deſiring the woman to continue in the houſe and take care of the furniture, ſatisfying her for the trouble I had given. On my arrival in London, I enquired amongſt my acquaintance for Sir Henry Courtney. By them I was informed that he was gone off with

with a young lady, and had retired with her to his ſeat in the north of England. This intelligence was ſufficient for me, and I took my reſolutions accordingly.

The next day I waited upon my father — told him I was under an abſolute neceſſity of paying a viſit to a friend who lived at ſome conſiderable diſtance from the metropolis; but at the end of a month I would return and give my hand to the lady he had made choice of for me.—My ready, and unexpected compliance with his wiſhes, reſtored me inſtantly to favour. He embraced me in a tranſport of joy, and freely gave his conſent to my intended expedition, without making any enquiries about the place I was going to; at the ſame time preſenting me with a bank bill of a hundred pounds, to enable me to pay any extraordinary expences I ſhould be at in travelling. Thus we parted. In the morning I ſhall ſet off in purſuit of that wretch who made uſe of the ſacred name of friend to betray the important truſt I repoſed in him.—My ſword ſhall revenge my cauſe, by finding its way to his per-

fidious heart.---Mine he has wounded in a manner that no time can heal.—

You may poſſibly be deſirous of knowing what could induce me to give my father a promiſe which was not in my power to fulfil.—You are miſtaken, my friend, I mean to perform that promiſe; yes, I will take advantage of the law in my favour, and leave the abandoned hypocrite, that I ſo long fondly cheriſhed in my boſom, to the fate ſhe merits.—When I ſo fooliſhly entered into this ill-fated engagement, we were both under age.—A conſiderable bribe prevailed with a needy and infirm ſon of the church to join our hands contrary to the laws of this nation.—Soon after he, and both the witneſſes, took their leave of life.—Had Henrietta continued the ſame ſpotleſs angel I once thought her, no bribe the world could have offered ſhould have drawn me from her. I ever regarded the tye as ſacred as the law could poſſibly have made it. But ſince ſhe is become abandoned—a proſtitute in the arms of her huſband's *friend*, I will never own her more. Happineſs I have for ever loſt—therefore I pay

my

my father no great compliment in giving him the power of beſtowing his ſon on whom he pleaſes. The lady ſhall have no reaſon to complain; if I cannot love, yet I will endeavour to make her happy. She ſhall enjoy the fortune ſhe gives to me in the manner moſt pleaſing to her; I will never reſtrain her pleaſures—and as carefully conceal my ſorrows in my own boſom, as the guilty murderer would hide himſelf from his purſuers.—The world may blame me for going in purſuit of the dark aſſaſſin of my peace, and venturing my life upon an equal footing with him. They muſt firſt feel my injuries ere they could tell how they would act in my ſituation. Courtney ſhall not triumph unpuniſhed. I will tear the paramour from the laſcivious arms of his baſe proſtitute.—I will have my child reſtored to mine.—Shall her blooming innocence be left to the mercy of ſuch a mother?—By early becoming a witneſs to guilt, ſhe would be an eaſy prey to the wiles of another Courtney.

Yet, Stanmore, is it poſſible? can Henrietta be ſo baſe? Wonder not that I doubt the voice of truth. How could deſtruction wear ſo ſweet a face? Beneath her beauteous form I thought each virtue dwelt. Whole hours I've gaz'd with rapture on her face, liſtened with pleaſed attention to that harmonious voice, which once conveyed ſuch noble ſentiments to my enraptured ſoul. At this moment, methinks I hear it pleading for Courtney. My brain's on fire. Mercy, I know thee not — farewel — perhaps we ne'er ſhall meet again.—

Beware of that curſt ſex, my friend, which brings deſolation to the ſoul.—Beware of a falſe friend, leſt he ſhould rob you of a Henrietta.—Once more, farewel —'till death I ſhall be yours.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

YOUR laſt letter has reſtored my mind to more compoſure. The thoughts of loſing my ſweet ſuffering friend, convey a pang worſe than that of death. Pardon me, Henrietta, for wiſhing the Almighty may ſtill indulge you with many years of life--it is a ſelfiſh, a cruel wiſh, unleſs I could reſtore you to happineſs, and *ſecure* it to you.—I am delighted that you have met with an acquaintance, and have conſented to go into company. Endeavour to be amuſed. — It is impoſſible for you to conceal your beauteous form by the careleſneſs with which you ever dreſſed. *That* rather ſerved to add new charms to the elegance of your figure. — I have two or three times indulged myſelf with an imaginary view of the ladies aſtoniſhment when you enter the aſſembly room at******, eſcorted by the venerable Mr. Aſhford, the becoming black adding to the delicacy of a complexion that wants not that advantage.—

You will make a conqueſt of half a dozen hearts at leaſt, if there are ſo many in the room that have hearts to diſpoſe of. Mr. Aſhford will inſtantly be applied to for his intereſt and information reſpecting his fair companion, and you will no longer be able to indulge your melancholy by living ſo much alone.—Such I hope will be the conſequence of your being ſeen. In a few weeks you will be reſtored to the fond arms of a huſband, and the enamoured ſwains will be all in the *penſeroſo* ſtile. I was ever reckoned to tell fortunes well—therefore preſume not to doubt the truth of my prediction.—

I am now compoſed enough to give you the account I hinted at in my laſt letter.—My ſiſter begins to ſuſpect the attachment between Mr. Cornwall and myſelf, by ſeeing us one evening earneſtly converſing together in the garden. With tears ſhe has hinted her ſuſpicions to my parents, declaring that I only did it to deprive her of the man ſhe loved—was ſure I had made ſome imprudent advances, or Mr. Cornwall would not have thought of a young lady that was engaged to a man of Mr. Danby's

rank

rank and fortune.—At the end of this tale ſhe added, that the happineſs of her life depended on her being united to him, and that death would be the conſequence of a diſappointment. — My infatuated parents believe every ſyllable ſhe tells them, and endeavoured to ſooth the artful hypocrite to compoſure. It was at length agreed that within a few days they would ſend for Mr. Cornwall, and my father ſhould inform him of Miſs Lucy's paſſion. "If he is not prepoſſeſſed in favour of ſome other, he will gladly accept ſuch an offer," continued my father; and if he does, you and your ſiſter ſhall be married on the ſame day; therefore chear up, Lucy: and I promiſe you, if he does not marry you, he never ſhall marry your ſiſter." — This was gaining a capital point—and Miſs was inſtantly reſtored to ſpirits. In a few days the dreaded propoſal will be made. I have not given Mr. Cornwall the leaſt hint of their deſigns; but will leave him to act in this affair according to the dictates of his own heart and ſuperior prudence. People often by laying a plan in ſuch caſes increaſe

their

their own diſtreſſes, which, if they were left to chance, might end much better.—

Since the above converſation I have been perpetually tormented by the officious, deteſted Danby.—My father has even told me, that he, and he alone ſhould be my huſband. Sooner would I wed my grave: but I am, thanks to nature, endued with a tolerable ſhare of ſpirits, and not of a diſpoſition to give way to deſpair.———

Do not be uneaſy on my account. Heaven preſerve me from adding affliction to the afflicted. Depend upon it, Henrietta, that I ſhall come off victorious; and the amiable Cornwall will reward me for all thoſe fiery trials which I meet with on his account. Witneſs my hand,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXIII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WISER and better is it, my Caroline, to look forward with hope, than to ſuffer deſpair to find entrance to our minds.—I admire you for your charming

ing ſpirits; may they never forſake you, whilſt time confirms the truth of each pleaſing wiſhed for prediction—But, like all fortune tellers, I doubt you are a flatterer. ———

The aſſembly which I mentioned in my laſt, was, on account of ſome perſons of diſtinction, that were coming to viſit in two or three families in the neighbourhood, deferred till this week. To morrow is the day.—I have undertaken to be my own milliner, and therefore am buſy in preparing for it. Mr. Aſhford will attend me—his company alone could make it tolerable. I have begged him, if my unexpected appearance ſhould excite the curioſity of any one to make enquiries after me, which I hope will not be the caſe, that he will carefully conceal every circumſtance reſpecting me, and only know me as the widow of Mr. Melville, an old friend of his.—He has readily conſented to this innocent piece of deceit, which can injure no one—Whilſt to remain unknown, is ſome alleviation to the hard hand of misfortune—I will not cloſe this letter till

I can

I can give you an account of our evening's entertainment.

* * * * * * *

I am juſt returned from the aſſembly—but, late as it is, have no inclination to think of reſt. Would you believe it, Caroline? Sir George Beaufort, the father of my cruel, my beloved Charles, was there. When I entered the room, the companion who attended me inſtantly introduced me to, and procured me the notice of the genteeleſt part of the company, who with pleaſed countenances welcomed Mr. Aſhford once more amongſt them; and in language which ſpoke the ſincerity of their hearts, expreſſed the pleaſure which the unexpected addition he made to their party gave them. The aſſembly was not large, but genteel. Sir Thomas Maxwell and his Lady, to whom Sir George Beaufort was viſiter, were there. The latter ſoon ſingled me out from the reſt, and as I refuſed to dance, attached himſelf to me the whole evening. I made uſe of this opportunity to ingratiate myſelf as much as poſſible in his favour. I liſtened with particular attention to the converſation

tion he addreſſed to me, and, my ſituation conſidered, was in tolerable ſpirits the greateſt part of the evening; but juſt as the company were going to ſeparate, a lady, whom Sir George roſe up to ſpeak to, but who ſtood near enough for me to hear what paſſed, inquired whether his ſon, Colonel Beaufort, was arrived in England. He returned an anſwer in the affirmative—ſaid he had been at home ſome time, and was now on a viſit to a friend.

I had heard too much. Returned, and not to me! The thought was not to be ſupported. I fell lifeleſs on the floor. My fainting ſo ſuddenly occaſioned a violent buſtle; but I was ſoon well enough to accompany Mr. Aſhford home. None expreſſed greater uneaſineſs at ſeeing me indiſpoſed, than Sir George Beaufort—and, at parting, begged he might be allowed to call upon me the following afternoon. Mr. Aſhford anſwered for me, that a viſit from him would be thought an honour.

At our return Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford congratulated me on the fortunate meeting between me and my huſband's father —recommended to me to uſe my utmoſt endea-

endeavours to get into his favour—at the ſame time repreſented to me the folly of being ſhocked at hearing of Colonel Beaufort's return, becauſe I had not ſeen him; when it was not poſſible he ſhould have diſcovered the place of my retreat, except he had the power of diſcovering things by ſome ſupernatural art.—His father ſaid he was gone to viſit ſome friend.—Perhaps he is in purſuit of me—or what is more likely, he may, ere now, believe the tale, which has every where ſpread itſelf, of my having gone off with the vile Sir Henry Courtney. Time muſt unfold the myſtery. —I will endeavour to be reſigned—and again reſume my pen when the dreaded viſit is at an end.

HENRIETTA MELVILLÆ.

LETTER XXXIV.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

THE viſit is over, and my heart more at eaſe.—How was I ſurpriſed, and how rejoiced, amidſt my confuſion! As the offer the father made me is a ſufficient excuſe

excuſe for the ſon, whenever our marriage is diſcovered.—But take the whole as it paſt.——

Sir George made his appearance about five in the afternoon, and on his firſt entrance made the moſt tender enquiries after my health; again ſignified his ſorrow for my indiſpoſition the preceding evening.—I thanked him—ſaid I was better, but ſubject to frequent faintings.—"My conſtitution is rather impaired," ſaid I, ſighing.—"Has grief," ſaid he, "ever found its way to your boſom, Mrs. Melville? — One would have thought angels had been exempted from its power."—"I have no pretenſions, Sir George, to ſo fine a compliment," I replied: "I am a mere erring mortal, like the reſt of the world, and young as I am, have already borne almoſt every outrage of fortune."—"The recollection of your woes (he returned) muſt be painful.—Let me perſuade you to baniſh them for ever. I never, Madam, was ſo ſtruck with the charms of any woman as I am with yours; your modeſt gentleneſs, your humility, and ten thouſand other nameleſs powers of pleaſing,

have

have determined me to make you an offer of my hand.—Without enquiring into the incidents of your life, I am ready to make you mine. The finding you under the protection of this venerable pair, is a ſufficient proof of the rectitude of your paſt conduct.—Sit ſtill, my good friends," ſaid he, to Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford, who attempted to leave the room; "Mrs. Melville has, I dare ſay, no ſecrets which ſhe conceals from you; therefore, I wiſh you to ſtay, and be a witneſs to the ſincerity of my offers. What ſay you, Madam, to a huſband? I am rather older than you, 'tis true; but I will atone for the difference of our ages, by an unwearied ſtudy to oblige and make you happy. Conſider well before you return an anſwer; recent as our acquaintance has been, I did not make this offer without ſeriouſly reflecting upon it—but every added reflection confirmed me in my purpoſe."—"The anſwer I have to give, Sir George, wants no conſideration."—"Say not ſo, Madam, 'tis a ſign you intend to diſappoint my hopes."—"From the ſhortneſs of our acquaintance, Sir, I flatter myſelf that diſappointment will not be

be very great. The compliment you have paid me, Sir George, entitles you to my eſteem, and demands the utmoſt frankneſs. —You have children, Sir, and were it only on their account, I could not accept your hand." —"My daughter, and youngeſt ſon," ſaid he, "have diſobliged me — I ſhall provide for them according to their future behaviour. My eldeſt ſon, Colonel Beaufort, muſt have my eſtate when I am gone, and he has promiſed to oblige me very ſoon, by marrying a lady I have provided for him." I turned pale, but endeavoured to conquer my confuſion as well as I could. "I am ſorry to hear your children have diſobliged you, Sir George, but hope that they will ſoon be reſtored to your favour, and continue to deſerve it. I am likewiſe extremely obliged to you for your generous offer, and for the good opinion which you entertain of me; but can never think of a ſecond marriage. My vows were once made to the man I loved; but never ſhall to any other.—Early did my youthful heart receive the fond impreſſion, which time can never eraſe." He lamented my determination, made uſe of

various

various arguments, which I told him I was ſorry were not in a better cauſe. "Were your ſon, Colonel Beaufort, for inſtance, to make his addreſſes to ſuch a needy wretch as I am, what would you ſay, Sir George? You would baniſh him, I fear, for ever from your preſence."—"The ſuppoſition will not hold good, Madam. I begin to think there is not ſuch another female in the world; if there was, and my ſon was ſo fortunate as to gain the prize, the fair object would plead his excuſe with me and all the world."—When he took his leave, he deſired we would not mention what had paſſed—"It would ſpare him," he ſaid, "the mortification of receiving jokes that would wound his heart."—We promiſed to comply, and he took his leave; but ſaid he would call upon us again before he left the country.—Sir George had undoubtedly other reaſons for wiſhing us to conceal his offer.—It would not only ſave him from the ridicule of the world, but from the mortification of having his children acquainted with his folly:—As they might at any future period plead

plead his example in excuſe for themſelves.——

When he was gone, Mrs. Aſhford declared, that, had ſhe been in my place, ſhe would have diſcovered her union with his ſon.—"What, without knowing, Madam, whether he would acknowledge me for his wife? Has he not promiſed to wed another? My marriage, you know, though bound with every ſacred rite, was not lawful. I have, therefore, no tye but on his honour; no dependance but on that love which alone could make me happy.—Indeed, I once thought them a ſufficient barrier again every change of fortune."—"And ſuch, I hope, you ſtill will find them," ſaid Mr. Aſhford. "Madam, Fortune ſeems to be coming into good humour with you; ſince you have conquered the father, can you doubt your triumph o'er the ſon, and that too after having ſuffered ſo much for his ſake?"—

'Tis ſome conſolation, my Caroline, to think that I ſhall one day be beyond the reach of ſorrow, and find ſecurity from every danger; and, thank heaven, 'tis in my own power to procure myſelf a welcome

come reception in that world, where pain and grief remain unknown, where no forgetful Beauforts can diſturb my peace.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXV.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

I BEGIN to think, my Henrietta, that you and I ſhall one day figure as the heroines of ſome romance.—And, let me tell you, no very deſpicable figures ſhould we make.—The fiery trial, which I ſo much dreaded, is paſt—and a fiery one it was indeed — the conſequences not very pleaſing—however, I am determined not to be dejected. I have a lover that will not deceive the confidence which my heart repoſes on his truth, and which alone affords it the only proſpect of happineſs.—Yeſterday Mr. Cornwall was ſent for, to hear whether he was willing to *ſell* himſelf to miſery. My ſiſter, and myſelf, were deſired to keep in our apartments.—She knew on what account—I was left to find

find it out as I could. However, I imagined what was going forward below ſtairs, by the reſtleſs confuſion in which my ſiſter appeared.—About ſix o'clock the parlour door was thrown open with the utmoſt violence, and I heard my father rudely deſiring ſomebody never to enter his houſe again. Immediately after the well known voice of Mr. Cornwall reached my ear.—"I have too much pride, Sir," ſaid he, "to refuſe complying with your command: On my account let not the lovely Caroline ſuffer one moment's uneaſineſs."—"Oh! to be ſure," cried my ſiſter, "ſhe is a lovely creature. Then things are as I ſuſpected: but dearly, Miſs, will I be revenged."—"What, is it jealous?" ſaid I.—"Come, come, Lucy, have patience, Papa will yet buy it a huſband."—Her rage was beyond all bounds, and juſt going to break out in ſome pretty invectives, when a voice was thundered through the hall with, "*Come down, girls.*" Away tript the enraged Miſs Lucy, I following.—When we entered the room, where ſat our good father and mother, ſuch a ſcene enſued,

ſued, as would have afforded a fine piece for the genius of a Stevens.

By what I afterwards diſcovered, the following converſation had paſſed during Mr. Cornwall's viſit.—On his entrance into the room my father aroſe, and taking his hand, told him, he had ſent for him on an affair of the greateſt conſequence to his own peace, and his (Mr. Cornwall's) future advantage. The other deſired to know what that was—Said he was ready to do any thing in his power to ſerve Mr. Tylney, or any of his family.—"I have diſcovered, Mr. Cornwall, that my girl has a partiality in your favour; and as I would ever ſtudy to make my children happy, I ſent for you, to tell you that I am ſo great an admirer of your character, that if you are diſpoſed to become a huſband, I will give you ten thouſand pounds with her."—Poor Cornwall was in a tranſport of joy. He took my father by the hand, and in a language peculiar to himſelf, poured forth the grateful acknowledgments of his honeſt heart. When he had done: "Will you not compleat your generoſity, my dear Sir, by letting me ſee the

the charming Caroline?"—"*Caroline!* re-echoed my father!—Why the man is mad. 'Tis Lucy I deſign for you. Caroline, you know, has been long engaged to Mr. Danby. On her I fix all my hopes of aggrandizing my family."—Poor Cornwall was like one ſtruck dumb with terror: at length, recovering his ſpeech: "Pardon me, Mr. Tylney, but I cannot think of being married to Miſs Tylney. This miſtake is unlucky indeed.—Long have I ſeen, long have I lov'd the beauteous Caroline, nor did my heart ever own the power of any other fair one. My deluded ſoul was in raptures, becauſe I thought you deſigned to give her to my arms." "So you have long loved the artful minx, have you, Sir? And what, ſhe returns your beggarly love, I ſuppoſe, notwithſtanding you knew ſhe was engaged. I imagine, the next thing you do, will be to perſuade the imprudent girl to go off with you—but know, I would never give her a penny. No—my other diſappointed girl ſhould have every ſhilling."—"I am ſorry to find, contrary to your profeſſions, that you have ſo mean an opinion of me," returned Mr.

Cornwall.—" Were Miſs Caroline as partial to me as you ſeem to ſuſpect, why ſhould it be deemed a greater crime to love, in one daughter, more than in the other. To ſhew how little I am to be led by the power of gold, give me, with the beauteous Caroline, only a quarter part of the ſum you offered me with Miſs Tylney —ſettle that quarter upon your daughter, it will be ſufficient to ſupport her, and a ſecurity from diſtreſs, gladly will I accept her hand, and though you ſhould not give me one ſhilling, will never ceaſe to thank you. But do not ſacrifice the gentle maid to ſatisfy an ambition, which a few years muſt terminate; 'tis ſelling her to certain miſery." " And pray, who told you that ſhe muſt be miſerable?"—" The character of the man you have fixt on.—Nor can any one, who ſees Miſs Caroline in company with the ridiculous fop, be a ſtranger to her juſt averſion." " Do but hear the inſolent preaching puppy, wife."—The door was thrown open, and they parted as above-mentioned.——

You may imagine, from what had happened, that on my entrance into the room

I was

I was loaded with reproaches on all ſides.

Lucy wept and raved—abuſed Cornwall, and inſulted me, whilſt Papa and Mama endeavoured to conſole the forlorn diſappointed maid.—Mr. Danby at this inſtant entered the room.—The diſcovery that had been made was told him, with every aggravated addition which anger and malice could form. They declared I deſigned to elope with his rival. My father then aſked the wretch if he could, after ſuch a proof of my imprudence, conſent to make me his wife; that if he could, next week he ſhould receive my hand.—The ſpiteful envious monſter readily accepted the cruel offer, and Lucy exulted in her triumph over me and Cornwall, whom ſhe abuſed with every epithet which diſappointed love (or rather malice) could invent. I was then deſired to remain a priſoner in the houſe, till I purchaſed my freedom in becoming a wife—"Or rather give up that and happineſs altogether," ſaid I.—"With patience have I hitherto borne all theſe undeſerved inſults of rage and cruelty; but ſince you have taken your reſolution, give

me leave to take mine likewiſe.—With ſorrow," continued I, addreſſing my parents, "I am obliged to act contrary to your wiſhes, becauſe the complying with them would make me for ever wretched. You may drag me to the altar, but no power on earth ſhall force me to give *that* man my hand when there. I will, before the clergyman, declare the truth of my ſituation: he will not dare to act in oppoſition to the laws of God and man. For you, Sir," turning to Mr. Danby, "know I never deſpiſed you half ſo much as at this moment; methinks your heart appears upon your countenance. If you would wiſh me ever to forgive your inſults, never let me ſee you more.—As to you, Miſs, though you are ſo many years my elder, and reſpect is ſometimes due to age—yet will I never be accountable to you for any action of mine. It has long been my ſtudy to make you a friend; but friendſhip is a paſſion too refined to dwell in ſuch an envious boſom."—Without any oppoſition I left them to reflect on what had paſſed, and retired to my apartment, with no very agreeable reflections, as you may imagine

—yet

—yet my ſpirits, at preſent, do not forſake me.

After my departure, laſt night, the good folks wiſely determined to keep me a cloſe priſoner, in my chamber, till I conſented to comply with their commands; but thinking this place too near Mr. Cornwall, and knowing what a fly urchin Love is ſaid to be, reſolved to accompany me to a houſe which they have about ten miles diſtance from this place, to confine me to my apartment, and give my ſiſter the important charge of me. I will not cloſe this letter till I have ſeen my priſon.

* * * * * * *

We arrived at this dreary, hateful place early this morning—The *agreeable* Mr. Danby of the party. In an hour after my arrival, I was ſhewn to my apartment, which, by the way, is the dulleſt and moſt horrid in the houſe. Miſs Lucy was inveſted with the full power of guarding her obſtinate, diſobedient ſiſter—Therefore, behold the fair diſconſolate now figuring in the very amiable character of *jailor*. In ſpite of all their watchful care, I have already found a friend to convey this letter

to you—It is no other than old Jerry, the butler, who has lived with us ſo long. To him you muſt direct your future letters, and order them to be left at a little public houſe about two miles from ours—The ſervants all diſlike the wretch, Danby, whilſt they idolize my favourite. What can he think of our ſudden retreat? Alarmed for my ſafety, he undoubtedly will perform ſome feats of Quixotiſm, and I ſhall one day ſee him arrive, armed cap-a-pee to free me from captivity. With ſuch pleaſing hopes you need not fear my ſpirits will forſake me. Yours, my Henrietta, either in a priſon or a palace.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXVI.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

BEFORE I had proceeded thirty miles on my journey, I was luckily informed, that Sir Henry Courtney was on a viſit to a friend of his who lives in a little village near *******, in ***ſhire. I inſtantly recollected the having heard him mention a friend he had there of the name

of

of Symonds, and directly altered my courſe, and purſued that to ******. Never had a miſerable wretch a more miſerable journey. My ſoul was torn with a variety of conflicting diſagreeable paſſions. No ſocial companion to chear the gloom within.—At length I arrived at the village —put up my horſe, and took my lodging at a little public houſe, within leſs than half a mile of Mr. Symonds's.—Sir Henry Courtney once had courage—but the guilty are ever cowards in danger or affliction. I determined not to ſend a challenge, but by a verbal meſſage deſire he would come the next day to ſuch a place, and meet a perſon who wanted to ſpeak with him on an affair of ſome conſequence. That point ſettled, I ſat down to a ſimple meal which the good folks provided for me. Before I had finiſhed my repaſt, I ſaw the deſtroyer of my peace go paſt on horſe back, accompanied by a gentleman and lady, who, I was afterwards informed, were Mr. Symonds and his ſiſter. The lady appeared about the age of eighteen —her face handſome, and perſon elegant. Sir Henry was converſing with her, whilſt

ſhe ſeemed to regard him with an eye of approbation.—I ſuppoſe he has ere now abandoned the fallen Henrietta to all the miſeries of guilt and poverty. Scarce could I keep myſelf from flying to the villain, and demanding inſtant ſatisfaction. Prudence, and a fear of being hindered from my purpoſe, alone prevented me. In the morning we ſhall meet. If I fall, conceal my ſtory from the world. If juſtice ſhould this once attend the guilty, I muſt take my chance. Many have left their country on a worſe account.—But where is this unhappy wife?—Though ſhe has abandoned me, ſtill does my heart hang round her. I would ſave her from farther infamy, by allowing her enough to live obſcurely in ſome retired corner of the earth, provided ſhe would patiently give me up my Jeſſa.—If I fall, ſave her if poſſible, Stanmore, from the rage of a mercileſs, unforgiving world. Tell her, how I lamented her infidelity, and died in endeavouring to revenge my wrongs upon the curſt, the baneful cauſe.—Though ſhe will not lament my fall, I would compell her to eſteem my memory.—My mind is

ſoftened

ſoftened by reflecting on paſt ſcenes—I dare not dwell longer on them. The clock ſtrikes twelve. Every inhabitant of this houſe is retired to reſt. I will to bed: the next night I may ſleep on my parent earth. The thought conveys a *melancholy pleaſure*—Adieu.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XXXVII.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY, *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

MY ſiſter entered my apartment this morning, juſt as I was going to dedicate a few lines to my Henrietta. "What! You are going to write, pretty miſs—is the letter to be for a lover or friend? Entruſt it to my care, you may depend on its having a ſafe conveyance, and I know of no other poſſible method your ſcheming wit can contrive to ſend it." "You are even beneath my contempt," ſaid I, turning to the glaſs, and pretending to alter my cap: "If a few of my charms would alter your temper, I think, in pity, I would contrive ſome means to lend, or

give them to you." "Inſulting, vain flirt!" cried ſhe, throwing herſelf into a chair, almoſt out of breath with paſſion; "the only good they ever procured you, was the notice of Mr. Danby, who has pleaded ſo ſtrongly in your favour, that your parents have conſented to give you the liberty of going down ſtairs and ſpending the day with them, to ſee what effect their indulgence will have on your perverſeneſs; for my part, I wiſh they do not repent it." "Since that indulgence was granted, only to oblige Mr. Danby, I will not accept it—I am become fond of retirement, and will not owe a favour to him or you." She flounced out of the room, and preſently a ſervant appeared, who in my mother's name, deſired me to go down to breakfaſt. I inſtantly obeyed. — "As you deſired me to leave my apartment, Madam, I with pleaſure came down ſtairs—but I will never ſtoop to comply with the will of thoſe who have no right to controul me." "I give them that right," ſaid my father; "and unleſs you will conſent to oblige me and your mother, I ſtill inveſt them in that right. Never, Caroline,

line, ſhall you have your will in being married to that beggarly Cornwall." "I want not to be married to Mr. Cornwall, whoſe poverty was not conſidered as a *reproach*, till he refuſed miſs Tylney—but I ought to have the liberty of living unmarried, if I may not have the man my heart could approve." "There," cried the malicious Lucy, who had till that moment ſat ſilently ſwelling with paſſion and envy, "I hope that is at once a free confeſſion that ſhe is in love, even to you ſhe ſcruples not to avow it: Miſs is quite in high airs to day; but I did not expect ſhe would carry them ſo far!" "The wiſhing to live unmarried, if I could not have a man I could love, was no confeſſion of partiality to any one. —Mr. Cornwall is an amiable man, and not the leſs ſo, for the generous preference he has ſhown in my favour."—"Girls, girls," cried my mother, "have done; do, Caroline, try to reſtore us all to peace, by accepting the offered hand of Mr. Danby." "Why, my dear madam, muſt my happineſs be ſacrificed to pride and envy? I could be content with a very ſmall part of my father's fortune: let him give the reſt

to

to my ſiſter, to purchaſe her a huſband that will make her and you happy."—Mr. Danby came into the room; my ſiſter, weeping with paſſion, run out, declaring ſhe would die rather than be ſo inſulted.—Mr. Danby, with a fawning air of ill affected compaſſion, approached me, and offering to take my hand, lamented my cruelty which ſtill made him miſerable, as well as myſelf,—and induced my parents to treat me with a rigour that wounded his heart.—"Convince me of the truth of what you aſſert," ſaid I, "by inſtantly withdrawing your hateful pretenſions. I ſhall then regard you as a friend; but at this inſtant I look upon you as my worſt enemy. You have been the means of robbing me of liberty, and the affections of once indulgent parents. To you I am indebted for the inſults I am continually receiving from a cruel ſiſter. Such are the ways you make uſe of to gain my heart—and do you think it poſſible to ſucceed?" "Conſent to be mine," ſaid he, "and every pleaſure the world affords ſhall be yours." "Never. By wedding you, I ſhould wed every care."—"To your room

room this inſtant, and never let me ſee your face again," ſaid my father, " till you accept that generous young man for a huſband."—" Permit me, Madam, to take one hour's walk in the garden," ſaid I, " ere I return to my priſon. My health will inevitably be deſtroyed for want of air."—" Why will you deſtroy it, Caroline? You know not how you diſtreſs me and your father. You may go into the garden—but don't ſtay abroad too long." Mr. Danby offered to accompany me.—" Suffer not that man, dear Madam, to deprive me of the ſcanty pleaſures with which I am to be indulged. I would prefer a dungeon to a paradiſe, if forced to hold converſation with him."—" Oblige her this once," ſaid my mother.—" Your turn will come next," interrupted my father, as I left the room, and then, with an oath, confirmed the promiſe he had made him, of forcing me to be his.—

The morning was fine—The garden, which is large, and laid out in the moſt pleaſing and romantic taſte, was profuſely ſtrewn with ten thouſand ſweets.—I was not in a humour to reliſh the beauties with which

which I was ſurrounded. The gloom that hung upon my mind, threw a gloom over every flower and every ſweet.—I could ſee that it was my artful ſiſter who urged my parents to this unheard of cruelty, in endeavouring to force me into the arms of a man I deſpiſed; parents too, that had once been ſo tenderly indulgent. I had ſupported my ſpirits whilſt in the preſence of them and the hateful Danby; but they now ſunk to the loweſt dejection. I wandered to the furtheſt part of the garden, which is bounded by a thick hedge, at the back of which is a lane that leads to ſome of the farmers houſes. I ſat down on a garden ſeat, and burſting into tears, gave ſome relief to my over-burthened heart. Before I had ſat there five minutes, I heard a ruſtling behind the hedge, and inſtantly Mr. Cornwall bounded over, and was kneeling at my feet.—I gave a faint ſcream of ſurprize and joy — He put his hand to my mouth, and ſoftly begged me to accompany him to a more retired part of the garden for a few minutes. — I aroſe and conducted him. He there informed me, that he had been waiting about the garden

ſeveral

ſeveral days, in hopes of meeting with an opportunity of ſpeaking to me—Lamented, in the moſt pleaſing terms, the ſorrow he felt at my preſent dangerous, and gloomy ſituation, and urged me, with all the eloquence of love, to make uſe of the preſent moment in eſcaping with him, and for ever putting an end to the pretenſions of his mean ungenerous rival.—" Conſent, my ever dear Caroline, cried the generous, honeſt youth, to ſhare with me the poor pittance I enjoy. Gladly would I brave every difficulty, encounter any hardſhip, to keep your dear boſom a ſtranger to diſtreſs." " Nor is your happineſs, Mr. Cornwall," I returned, " of leſs conſequence to your Caroline. For myſelf, I have no ambition but to be yours: Yet I cannot conſent to bring diſtreſs and poverty upon the man I love." " Think not of ſuch gloomy proſpects, but accept the preſent lucky moment which offers freedom. To call you mine, would for ever keep me a ſtranger to diſcontent. Your preſent ſituation, the danger you are in of falling a victim to the arts of an envious woman, and unworthy lover, are the motives

tives which induced me to offer this expedient."—I was ſilent.—"Heſitate not, my Caroline—Let us fly this deteſted place for ever. Your Cornwall cannot give you affluence; but it ſhall be the unwearied ſtudy of his life to make you happy."—At that inſtant a voice, which I knew to be my ſiſter's, and who had, unknown to us, over-heard the whole of our converſation, being concealed from us by the profuſion of leaves with which the trees are dreſt, cried out, "Help! help! This moment come, or Caroline will be gone with that villain, Cornwall:" Running, and ſcreaming, as ſhe went along. Mr. Cornwall, inſtead of flying, claſped his arms around me. ——"Unfortunate wretch that I am!" cried he—"to be only a means of encreaſing your diſtreſs." "Leave me this moment, deareſt of men, or my fears on your account will diſtract me. You have no weapon to defend you, and will be murdered amongſt them."—"I cannot forſake you, Caroline; for you I would brave any danger."—"Call it not forſaking, but preſerving me," I cried, almoſt frantick. "I have no other treaſure in life but

but you." We heard ſome perſons coming, he ſaw my diſtreſs; and to end my fears, embraced me, and was gone in an inſtant, firſt promiſing to leave no means untried to ſee me again. My father, mother, ſiſter, Mr. Danby, and two men ſervants advanced. I was inſtantly loaded with reproaches, whilſt each countenance bore the marks of diſappointment at finding me alone. "Little did I think," ſaid my mother, "that you Caroline, would have made ſo ill a uſe of my indulgence." —"Curſe me," cried the inſulting beau, who received courage from finding his rival gone, "but I would have thraſhed the poaching ſcoundrel moſt finely, if I had chanced to have found him here—His petticoats ſhould not have protected him from my reſentment.—I gave him a look of contempt, but ſaid nothing. Any excuſe I could have made, would not have been regarded. I was hurried to my apartment, which I am not to leave again, it ſeems, till I conſent to *buy* my freedom with the loſs of peace—Or, what's more dear, of Cornwall.—Since my unexpected meeting with that dear youth, my heart is more

more at eaſe—His generous, his diſintereſted love, amply repays me for all I ſuffer. Think not, my Henrietta, that my own ſituation, diſagreeable as it is, baniſhes from my mind the thoughts of yours. I rejoice at the conqueſt you made of the heart of Sir George Beaufort, whilſt I begin to be ſurpriſed at the ſilence of the ſon? Yet, perhaps, even now he is in ſearch of you—If ſo, you ſoon will meet. To make that diſcovery the more eaſy to your Charles, go more into company. The love which Sir George has ſo freely confeſt for you, will pave the way to an eaſy reconciliation, when he knows you to be the wife of his ſon.———

I hope you will rely on *me* as a fortune-teller for the future. Write oftener, my Henrietta; be ſparing of your tears, but more free of your letters; 'tis an age ſince I have heard from you. This letter is almoſt ſwelled to the ſize of a volume—But the cauſe muſt plead my excuſe for its tireſome length. The people below are in a cloſe cabal, laying their wiſe heads together to help forward ſome pretty ſcheme.—They are miſtaken if they think

to

to bend me to their purpoſe. They, on the contrary, furniſh me with weapons againſt themſelves. A generous treatment would have done much. I ſhould then have been in ſome danger of obliging them: but, treated as I am, it will never do. Better to be unhappy in compliance with the will of one's own heart, than with that of other peoples.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

INDEED, my Caroline, my heart bleeds for your diſtreſs, and uncomfortable ſituation. I cannot adviſe you to oblige your parents, by giving your hand to ſo deſpicable and unworthy a being as that Mr. Danby; but, in pity to yourſelf, and your beloved Mr. Cornwall, avoid going off with him, and conſenting to a private marriage. Alas! you know not the miſeries with which it may be attended. I ſhould hope, that in a little time, when your parents are convinced that you

are

are not to be prevailed on to marry Mr. Danby, they will give over perſecuting you on his account. Your ſiſter, too, muſt grow tired of the diſagreeable office, which ſhe at preſent fills with ſo much diſcredit to herſelf and the feelings of her heart. Mr. Cornwall has acted like the real lover, and man of honour.—I rejoice that your ſpirits do not forſake you, my Caroline, at a period when you ſo much want them, for, like falſe friends, they too often leave us when we moſt want their aſſiſtance.——

My ſituation, my friend, remains the ſame as when I laſt wrote. The uncertain ſuſpence with which my mind is burthened, grows almoſt too heavy to be ſupported, notwithſtanding the conſoling arguments of Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford. Solitude and tears are my greateſt conſolation. Separated from my Beaufort, life is death; the world a grave. You adviſe me to go into company; but I cannot conſent to follow that advice. Diverſions rather increaſe than leſſen ſuch woes as mine. At this inſtant my mind is unuſually heavy. —When I began this letter I determined not to complain; but this hated *ſelf* clings

ſo

ſo cloſe about me that I could not ſhake it off. Pardon me, my Caroline, for adding to your ſorrows by a repetition of my own. 'Twas ungenerous, unlike the friendſhip which I with ſo much ſincerity profeſs. Sir George Beaufort is ſtill in this part of the world, therefore the farewel viſit is ſtill to make.

To oblige me, Mr. Aſhford, a few days ſince, ſent a ſervant to my long abandoned habitation, to diſcover if any one had been there to enquire for me, or whether any letters had been ſent. The old woman gave him a packet, directed to Sir Henry Courtney, on his promiſing to get it conveyed to him, but which I took the liberty to open; ſeeing it directed in the colonel's hand.—I have ſent you a copy of the letters encloſed within it.—Think how much they wounded an already wounded heart. By the date of them, they muſt have laid ſomewhere long concealed or neglected—and muſt likewiſe have fallen into ſome one's hands, that knew of Sir Henry's viſit to me.

The woman likewiſe mentioned a gentleman's having been there, who commanded

ed her to make him up a bed for his reception, and ſaid, he was the maſter of that houſe; and who, to uſe her own expreſſion, *took on* moſt ſadly about ſome lady. In what a labyrinth of grief and confuſion does all this involve me! I dare not think.

Endeavour to be eaſy, Caroline; ſuffer not your temper to be ruffled by the malignant inſults of your ſiſter; convince her how much you are above being hurt by them—by ſhewing no reſentment.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXIX.

(Incloſed in the foregoing.)

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

WHAT can be the meaning of this alarming ſilence? How ungenerous, thus to play with my impatience! Courtney, from you I never expected ſuch treatment. My heart is tortured by the moſt diſtracting ſuſpence. Is it juſt thus to uſe the man for whom you profeſs a friend-

friendſhip? The time is drawing near for my return. 'Tis your own conduct that muſt determine whether I am to be a friend, or enemy.———

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XL.

(Incloſed in the foregoing.)

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

CRUEL, forgetful, offending Henrietta! Why have you not wrote to him who condeſcended ſo often to ſupplicate for what he had a right to demand? Have you forgotten that you are a mother, and a wife?—Do you no longer remember how chearfully you once promiſed to obey? —Can you—But ſurely 'tis impoſſible— You muſt be all that's good, as you are all that's fair. Some accident—ſickneſs —ſomething unexpected, unforeſeen— muſt have intervened. Pity me, my wife, my Henrietta, and eaſe this inſupportable ſuſpence. Remove this wounding anxiety from the heart of him—who ſtill loves—

forget-

forgetful, cruel, thoughtleſs, as you are.—

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLI.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

WE have met—and I am come off victorious. On my return to town I left my falſe friend, to the care of ſome peaſants, with few ſigns of life. The wounds he has recived, I fear are mortal. No ſooner did he appear than I drew my ſword. He would have expoſtulated.—Murmured ſomething of innocence and Henrietta:—But, I told him, I came not to talk, but fight, and bade him ſtand on the defenſive. Some people ſaw, and were running to part us; but my well pointed ſword had, ere they arrived, found its juſt revenge. Yet the ſight of his blood, whom I once had called my friend, ſoftened my reſentment. I would have exchanged forgiveneſs with him, but he was ſpeechleſs. After ſtrongly recommending him to the people's care—and giving them directions where to carry him, I ſet off with a mind much diſcompoſed, and at war with

with itſelf. I have received a ſlight wound in my arm and ſhoulder; but intend ſtopping at ſome place, in my way, to reſt myſelf and get it dreſt. In a few days you may expect to ſee me in London.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLII.

Mrs. MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

OH Caroline! thou dear ſuffering friend of the now completely wretched Henrietta; tell me what will fate at laſt do with me? My only conſolation now ariſes from the certain knowledge of its not being poſſible that ill fortune can have greater or even equal trials in ſtore for me like thoſe I have experienced. Was it not enough that I was driven from a huſband's arms?--Left within the power of a baſe artful villain—forced to abandon a helpleſs infant, the only treaſure that was left me? But muſt I be ſuſpected of a crime which my ſoul ſhudders but to think of? Muſt I, after ſo long, ſo painful an abſence, be ſpurned with contempt by the man I love?—Loaded with reproaches which I ne'er deſerved, and branded with every epithet which could ſcarcely be deſerved, but by the baſeſt of my ſex? —All this I have borne; and yet I live to tell it. The infant dawn of hope, which

I ſo

I ſo fooliſhly began to cheriſh, is now fled for ever. Calamity has marked me for her own.

Why was I ever permitted to be an inhabitant of this miſerable world? Completely wretched to myſelf—calumniated, and deſerted by him who ought to have ſheltered and protected me—the dire cauſe of ſorrow to all thoſe who ever regarded me with an eye of friendly pity—can I have farther buſineſs with life? Too credulous Beaufort! Unhappy, injured Henrietta!—All my fortitude gives way before this laſt, but heavieſt ſtroke.

When my mind is enough compoſed, I will endeavour to give you an account of what has happened, and which has rendered the fictitious name of Melville no longer neceſſary to conceal that of

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

AS ſoon as I could call home my ſcattered and diſtracted thoughts to any degree of compoſure, I ſat down to give the promiſed melancholy tale to my dear Caroline. Without any farther complaining prologue, receive the dreadful account.

A few days ſince, Mr. Aſhford, ſeeing my ſpirits unuſually low, prevailed upon me to accompany him to *****, to make a viſit to Mrs. Freeland. We met with a welcome reception from that lady and her huſband. She told me I had choſen a lucky day to pay her my long promiſed viſit, as ſhe had a party of her moſt particular friends coming in the afternoon, to whom ſhe could give pleaſure by introducing me to them—as ſhe had heard ſeveral of them expreſs a deſire of meeting with ſuch an opportunity. I ſilently returned her obliging compliment with a bow; but was never in a worſe humour

to

to mix with company. On their arrival at Mrs. Freeland's, I found them as agreeable as they had been repreſented, and became tolerably chearful. Oppoſite Mr. Freeland's houſe is a large inn, which is noted for the goodneſs of its accommodation, and which is generally reſorted to by ſtrangers. When it was my chance to be out from the card table, I placed myſelf by the window, to ſee the people that were paſſing and repaſſing in the ſtreet—I had not ſat many minutes, when, if it is poſſible to convey any idea of that aſtoniſhment, that rapturous joy, may you imagine it, when I ſaw Colonel Beaufort ride paſt, and turn his horſe into the inn yard. His hair was hanging careleſsly about him—his cloaths were dirty—his countenance bore on it the traces of grief and rage—and he ſeemed to be in pain—whilſt marks of blood were on one ſide of his cloaths. Unable to conceal my emotion, or contain my impatience within bounds till a meſſage could be ſent to him—"My God! I exclaimed, there is my Beaufort, my beloved huſband!" I flew out of the room, and the moment he

was off his horſe, caught him in my arms, —" My Charles! my huſband!" I ſoftly cried—" are you at laſt returned to your Henrietta? Do I live once more to embrace, to claſp you in ſafety to this fond boſom?" — Oh, Caroline, think, now think what I ſuffered, when he haſtily diſengaged himſelf from my embraces, and with a coldneſs, a ſcorn that almoſt harrowed up my ſoul, burſt into the following invectives, —" Infamous ſtrumpet! baſe adultreſs! theſe artful blandiſhments are now too late. I have ſent your paramour to that world in which alone juſtice is ſure to triumph over vice. Think you that I will receive pollution to my boſom?" " Heaven have mercy!" I cried; " Who do you mean?" Many people were by this time aſſembled, amongſt the reſt, Mr. Aſhford, and the company from Mrs. Freeland's. " Vice ever merits ſhame," ſaid he, trembling with rage—" before theſe people I declare I will hold no farther converſe with ſo baſe a proſtitute." I knelt, I took hold of his coat: Sir George Beaufort that inſtant came by; attracted by the croud, he came amongſt them.

" Mrs.

"Mrs. Melville, and on her knees to my ſon, what can be the meaning of this?" He leapt off his horſe; but I, unmindful of his friendly notice, again caught hold of my huſband's coat—"I am innocent, indeed I am," ſaid I; "condeſcend, in pity to my wretchedneſs, to ſpeak one tender word. Permit me at leaſt to vindicate my conduct. Indeed I cannot ſupport the loſs of you many months. Sir Henry Courtney will one day clear that innocence, which he vainly attempted to deſtroy." "His lips are, ere now, for ever cloſed," ſaid he, ſpurning me from him with indignation—then calling for his horſe—"I am ready to perform my promiſe, Sir, turning to his father, "whenever you pleaſe." "Oh ſtay till I am dead."—I could ſay no more. My agony had found its way to the father's heart, though unable to move the ſon's. "Have patience, Charles," cried the proud, but ſoftened old man—"Here muſt be ſome miſtake. Mrs. Melville is the beſt of her ſex; but how you came to know her, and to be authoriſed to treat her thus, is a myſtery I wiſh to have explained." "Ceaſe

to enquire it, Sir; that woman, that pretended Mrs. Melville, is the vileſt, the moſt artful of her ſex; in ſpite of that look of innocence, ſhe is no ſtranger to the dark joys of guilt. Oh, Henrietta! why did you mimic virtue? Why force me to fly your arms for ever?"---He mounted his horſe, and was out of ſight in a moment; ſurpriſe deprived every one of the power to detain him. I was inſtantly bereft of life. Mr. Aſhford and Sir George caught me in their arms, and prevented me falling to the earth. The chaiſe was ordered immediately, and they attended me home. I remained inſenſible the greateſt part of the way, and for many hours after my arrival my faintings continued. During the time in which I appeared in ſo much danger, Mr. Aſhford unfolded the whole affair to Sir George. He was much affected at ſome parts of my ſtory.---Said, "He could not refuſe to pardon his ſon, notwithſtanding the imprudence of his marriage, and the obſtinacy with which he had ſo many years concealed it. I will, in a few days, ſet off for London in purſuit of my diſtracted boy," ſaid he, "and, if

poſſible,

poſſible, get matters cleared up; but fear it will be a difficult taſk to convince him of his Henrietta's innocence, if he has madly robbed his falſe friend of life." As ſoon as I had any interval of returning reaſon, Sir George approached the bed, and taking hold of my hand, with the tendereſt ſolicitude, enquired how I found myſelf, aſſured me of pardon and his protection, and promiſed to uſe his utmoſt endeavours to reconcile affairs between his ſon and me. Sir George would not leave the country 'till I was able to quit my apartment, which I did, for the firſt time, this afternoon, and Sir George ſets off in the morning,---At his departure, he told me, "That though I would not accept him as a lover, I ſhould ever find in him a father."—

But, all this time, what is become of my miſtaken, unhappy Beaufort? He appeared wounded, and looked as if he was in a raging fever. His hand juſt reeking with the blood of the deceitful Courtney, perhaps his own life in danger from that crime. Perhaps ſoon forced to fly for ever from his country, whilſt the weight of

murder upon his mind will untimely ſink him to the grave—And I the cauſe, the fatal cauſe of all this grief and miſery! I have ſcarce a thought to give to my poor deſerted Jeſſa. If I die, be you, my Caroline, a mother to her, and, if poſſible, ſay ſomething to ſave my bewildered ſoul from this diſtraction. O! Beaufort! thy love alone, I fear, can ſoften death, and eaſe theſe agonizing pangs.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIV.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* BEAUFORT.

WHY will my Henrietta encourage ſuch blind deſpair? Why give way to a dejection that muſt render a change of fortune of little conſequence? Without health, 'tis not in the power of thoſe we love to make us happy. Your trials, my friend, are indeed ſevere—The laſt was hardly to be ſupported, even by the ſatisfaction of knowing yourſelf innocent of thoſe crimes with which you are ſo unjuſtly branded. "Virtue blooms moſt

lovely

lovely on a rugged ſoil:" How much do you riſe ſuperior to your fortune! Heaven, I hope, will fortify your ſoul, and ſoon convince you that virtue triumphs over evil.—

Colonel Beaufort, at preſent, labours under ſome unfortunate miſtake, which a little time will aſſuredly clear up. Even at the inſtant that reſentment had baniſhed every tender emotion from his heart, the agony he diſcovered was a proof that he ſtill loved.—Sir George Beaufort has undertaken to plead your cauſe.—From ſuch an advocate you have every thing to hope: therefore, do not torment yourſelf with idle fears, which have no other foundation than that of a diſtempered mind. Should Sir Henry Courtney die of his wounds, Colonel Beaufort will undoubtedly be acquitted.

Your ſorrows, my Henrietta, have almoſt made me forget my own. Still do I remain a priſoner, and am continually expoſed to the rude inſults of an unfeeling, jealous ſiſter;—but a diſcovery will, I hope, ſoon be made, that will effectually turn the tables in my favour, and free me

from

from this irkſome and undeſerved confinement.

I have not ſeen any thing of Mr. Cornwall ſince my laſt letter—am kept too cloſe a priſoner to admit even a hope of ſeeing him at preſent;—yet I do not doubt but that happy time is drawing near. Let your heart, my Henrietta, be governed by ſuch hopes. When the tempeſt has ſpent the worſt of its rage, the clouds muſt paſs away to give place to a clear and ſerene ſky.

Adieu, my Henrietta; ever, and truly yours.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

Sir GEORGE BEAUFORT *to the Rev. Mr.* ASHFORD.

ON my firſt arrival in London I went to my ſon's lodgings; he was confined to his bed with a raging fever—The conſequence of ſome wounds which he had unfortunately received in a duel—and a violent hurry of ſpirits which he had undergone. Such was the true opinion of the phyſicians who attended him. I enquired if I might be permitted to ſee him—ſaid, I had ſome circumſtances to communicate, that would be a means of reſtoring his mind to peace. After cautiouſly preparing him to receive my viſit, I was admitted—but found him in a ſtate that far exceeded even my fears. He was quite delirious, and often repeated the name of Henrietta. It was two days before he took any notice of me, when the fever luckily abated, but left him in the weakeſt ſtate, with ſeveral painful wounds in his arm and ſhoulder, which, for want of being timely attended to, will, in all proba-

probability, be a long while before they are healed. The firſt time I found him tolerably compoſed, I ventured to name his Henrietta to him: It ruffled him very much; he even raved againſt her, branded her with inconſtancy and ingratitude, begged my forgiveneſs, and ſtill perſiſted in declaring, that, as ſoon as he was well, he would perform the promiſe he had made me, in paying his addreſſes to the daughter of Lord G. Thus prepared, I ventured to diſcloſe the whole of that hiſtory which I had heard from you,—told him the manner of my firſt meeting with her; and in conſequence of that, the offer I had made.—He was ſome time buried in profound thought, then, ſtarting, as if juſt awaked from a deluſive dream, declared it could not be—That his wife was as artful as ſhe was guilty. 'Twas in vain I argued in her favour. Diſbelief had taken deep root in his heart. Luckily, the next morning, a letter arrived from a Mr. Symonds, a friend of Sir Henry Courtney's, which contained an account of his being alive, and even likely to recover, though with the loſs of an arm:

arm: In which letter was likewiſe encloſed a confeſſion of the whole affair, taken from the lips of Sir Henry when he thought himſelf dying; and which ſo exactly correſponded with that which you had received from Mrs. Beaufort, that it inſtantly baniſhed every doubt.—And what added to the value of the letter, was a direction where to find their little Jeſſa, who I ſhall to-morrow reſtore to the arms of her parent. My ſon is now as impatient to ſee his Henrietta, as he was, a few days ſince, averſe: but as a removal might, at this time, be attended with fatal conſequences, I have prevailed upon him to ſtay here till he is better able to bear the fatigues of a journey. I have told him in how indifferent a ſtate of health I left his wife, and that it would be equally imprudent for her to come to him. She muſt not think of it. The bare idea of her undertaking ſo hazardous a journey fills him with terror.

Your friendſhip, my good Mr. Aſhford, will teach you to break this matter to your adopted daughter, in a manner ſhe can bear: gently hint at the indiſpoſition

ſition of her huſband, and by degrees give her reaſon to think that matters will be happily terminated.—The goodneſs and benevolent pity which you and Mrs. Aſhford ſo timely exerted in favour of the hapleſs, wandering Henrietta, have gained you a ſon as well as daughter. Colonel Beaufort declares he ſhall ever venerate you as a father—That he will never fail ſeeing you every opportunity. Indeed, I believe, if we can happen of houſes that will ſuit us, we ſhall become your neighbours.—

Yours, with real friendſhip and eſteem,

GEORGE BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. SYMONDS *to Colonel* BEAUFORT.

AT the requeſt of an almoſt dying friend, I take up my pen to addreſs you. Let not my being the friend of the unhappy Courtney render you regardleſs of the following lines.—Few have been his failings— Dearly has he paid for them. Yet I am not the friend, but diſcourager of vice. Sir Henry never, but in this inſtance, forfeited that rectitude of heart and conduct for which the world ſo much admired him. You left him to guard a young beauty, whoſe charms, by the powerful impreſſion they made on him, in a manner deprived him of his reaſon, and made him determine to gratify a paſſion which till then had been a ſtranger to his boſom. When he was brought home, the day you ſo unfortunately met, he was ſpeechleſs, and remained ſo for ſome time.

The

The firſt uſe he made of returning reaſon, was to acquit you of the name of murderer, declaring, you fairly met, and fought in a juſt cauſe: that he alone was the aggreſſor. He then gave me the following account of every circumſtance that occurred during your abſence, which I here encloſe.

[Here follows an account of what happened during the abſence of Colonel Beaufort,—Of the declaration which Sir Henry made of his paſſion,—The attempt which was made to bribe her ſervant,—Henrietta's flight,—His repentance,—The care which had been taken of the child,—And a direction where to find her,—exactly as has been recounted before.]

The above is an exact and true recital of every thing that paſt when you was abſent from England. Sir Henry never either ſaw, or heard the leaſt tidings of Mrs. Beaufort ſince her flight: Nor could he ever, after the greateſt care, the ſtricteſt ſearch, diſcover any traces by which ſhe might be found. He ſays, his only chance of happineſs depends on your being more fortunate. He likewiſe begs that you would write a line to me, to aſſure him

him of your forgiveneſs of what is paſt; he will not aſk you to write to himſelf: If you are again bleſt with your Henrietta, to aſk the ſame favour from her.

For a long time the ſurgeons were doubtful of his recovery; his wounds were many and dangerous. They now think he will live, but are of opinion that he will loſe the uſe of his right arm.

If ſo fatal are the attempts of vice, what miſery muſt the ſucceſs of ſuch baſe deſigns bring with them! And how many are often involved in ruin by one bad action?— Juſtice is due even to an enemy. — Rapid was the fall of Sir Henry! ſhort the continuance of that fall; quick and ſincere his repentance. 'Tis certainly virtue to forſake vice.

How often do the innocent ſuffer with the guilty! I have a ſiſter in all the bloom and pride of life, who unhappily ſaw our fallen friend with too great a partiality for her future peace. She feels his wounds within her heart. When he continued inſenſible, ſhe would ſuffer none but herſelf to attend him, and now ſubmits that others ſupply her place to conceal her weakneſs from

from the man ſhe loves. Sir Henry is no ſtranger to her tender attachment, and, I believe, makes an equal return: She now reigns unrivalled in his heart. It was once, and is again, my firſt wiſh to call him brother. An unerring conduct is not to be expected from ſuch frail mortals as we are. — Sir Henry Courtney, though not faultleſs, has a thouſand virtues.—Write immediately, and give eaſe to a ſuffering penitent by granting the pardon he ſolicits. To return good for evil, is a ſure proof of a noble and great mind.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

LETTER XLVII.

The Rev. Mr. ASHFORD *to Sir* GEORGE BEAUFORT.

I Received the honour of your letter, and followed the directions it contained; but Mrs. Beaufort, unable to bear either ſuſpence or ſurprize, inſiſted with ſuch eagerneſs to ſee a part of its contents, that it would have been the higheſt cruelty to have denied her. — I ſhewed her the place where you mentioned your ſon's having

ing been indiſpoſed, with the account of his being better. — Gently hinted at his ſuſpicions being in part removed, and that the moſt pleaſing conſequences were likely to enſue. Notwithſtanding all this care, in breaking the matter to her, ſhe fainted twice during our converſation. I would adviſe, by all means, that you, Sir George, the Colonel, and the little Jeſſa, come to this place with all poſſible expedition. Mr. Freeland thinks that the life of Mrs. Beaufort depends on her mind's being reſtored to peace. She read the letter which the colonel received from Mr. Symonds; ſaid, Sir Henry had ſtrictly done juſtice in his account, and wiſhed him to receive that pardon which ſhe long had granted. I hope the Colonel will not refuſe to grant him his requeſt. Much ſweeter is forgiveneſs than revenge.

Talk not, Sir George, of any favours which my good woman and I have conferred on Mrs. Beaufort; the obligation is greatly on our ſide. She has reſtored to us the daughter we had loſt. The ſweet uncomplaining ſufferer has taught us a leſſon of patience and reſignation to the will

will of heaven, ſuch as we never ſaw before. The hopes you gave us, in your letter, of ſettling in this part of the world, have given pleaſure to us all. Our beloved daughter, Henrietta, (permit me ſtill to call her ſo) expreſſed her deſire of never being parted from us, till that final ſeparation takes place which muſt divide the tendereſt of friends. We have had ſome difficulty to prevail with Mrs. Beaufort not to attempt writing to her huſband, which, for ſome time, ſhe ſeemed determined to do; but as the attempt muſt be attended with a review of that painful ſcene to which you were a witneſs, it were better to be avoided.—

I once more entreat you, Sir George, that you will loſe no time, but ſet off for this place the very earlieſt opportunity. I have the honour to be Sir George Beaufort's obedient and very humble ſervant.

NATHANIEL ASHFORD.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq*;

THE firſt uſe I make of my being able to hold a pen, is to comply with your requeſt, and to thank you for the favour of your letter. Aſſure Sir Henry Courtney of my forgiveneſs, and that of my Henrietta. Tell him, that although I cannot conſent to hold any farther acquaintance with him, after being ſo cruelly deceived, I ſincerely wiſh his happineſs, and that of your lovely ſiſter, between whom, I hope, an union will one day take place.—Human nature is degenerate. We ſhould, I allow, condemn none, unleſs we knew the power of the temptation they had to encounter. My Henrietta is ſafe. I can pardon, and even pity the man I wounded; becauſe I know how great is the power of thoſe charms which ſubdued ſuch a mind as his.—I have much to be forgiven. I have not ſeen my Henrietta but once, and then by chance, when my mind was loaded with the moſt unjuſt ſuſpicions

picions of her honour, and when my reproaches wounded her gentle boſom more ſeverely, than my ſword did that of an offending friend. The wounds I received in my encounter with Sir Henry, are far from being healed, owing to my neglect of them at firſt. Would paſſion and injured love have ſuffered me to liſten to the voice of reaſon, it had not been. Till now, I never repented drawing my truſty ſword; and had Sir Henry Courtney fallen by my hand—it would ever have been a burthen to my ſoul.—

Vainly does man boaſt of ſtrength and fortitude to ſubdue his paſſions, and conquer the trials of human life. To talk of a power over nature, is the folly of philoſophers — I cannot boaſt of ſuch a power. The huſband, lover, father, friend, are the inhabitants of my heart. In defence of thoſe endearing ties, nature will exert her utmoſt efforts: yet far be it from me to vindicate the cuſtom of duelling. By myſelf I ſtand condemned for daring even to lift my hand againſt the life of *him* who appeared to have robbed me of a treaſure, far dearer than life itſelf. — In return for

the

the pardon I have granted, I now ſolicit the ſame from him and heaven.—

Within a few days I hope to be able to pay a viſit to my Henrietta, and to reſtore the gentle ſufferer to that felicity which ſhe ſo well deſerves.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIX.

The Rev. Mr. ASHFORD *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

YOUR amiable friend, young lady, in pity to your anxiety on her account, has ſolicited me to write. She is better than ſhe has been for ſome time paſt; but till quite recovered, is forbidden to uſe the pen. —The moſt pleaſing proſpects have ſucceeded thoſe gloomy ones, which for ſo long a time hung threatening o'er her head. Colonel Beaufort, convinced of her innocence, and the cruel injuſtice he has done her by his ſuſpicions, is impatient to make atonement; but at preſent has been prevented by illneſs. He is expected by your fair friend with an impatience equal to his own: ſhe will be ready to grant him

pardon, the moment he arrives to aſk it.

Your Henrietta deſires you to be perfectly eaſy on her account, as the ſerenity of her mind will, ſhe hopes, ſoon reſtore her to health. She likewiſe requeſts by me, her amanuenſis, that you would write immediately.—It was not clever of this Henrietta to introduce me to her friend, in ſo diſadvantageous a manner. My time for being a good letter writer is paſt; I am now become the child of age. However, ſhew ſome attention to my trifling letter, by anſwering it immediately—Your friend is impatient to hear from you. Remember how expectation clips the wings of time. Yours, madam, with reſpect and eſteem.—

NATHANIEL ASHFORD.

LETTER L.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* BEAUFORT.

JOY to my Henrietta, on that reverſe of fortune which has taken place. May returning health and every ſmiling joy crown many ſucceeding years with uninterrupted

terrupted peace. May our ſtories, my Henrietta, prevent every mortal from preſuming to doubt the goodneſs of a protecting providence: how often, when we are led by deſpair to imagine ourſelves the moſt wretched of human beings, do we find our ſufferings at an end, and that thoſe evils of which we complained, were to become the very means of making us happy!

By this time, I hope, you are reſtored to the arms of a fond, miſtaken huſband, and that your little Jeſſa is prattling by your ſide:—Whilſt her ſweet innocent careſſes convey additional tranſport to your delighted heart. Had happineſs ſtill been denied to you — it could not have dwelt with me. —

Before I proceed to unfold the pleaſing change which has taken place in my affairs, ſince I laſt wrote to you, I muſt beg you would make my acknowlegment to the good Mr. Aſhford for the favour of his letter, which was a moſt acceptable viſitant, and I preſſed the dear ſtranger to my lips. Tell him too, that he could not have been introduced in a more pleaſing man-

ner, had it been on any other account than the illneſs of the dear ſiſter of my heart.—However, as it brought hope and conſolation with it, it is regarded as a treaſure, and placed amongſt my moſt valued letters.

In my laſt letter I hinted at a diſcovery which was likely to be made. The miſery of my ſituation alone, could lead me to wiſh for ſuch a diſcovery, which muſt inevitably expoſe the guilt of my imprudent ſiſter — but not to anticipate the events which ſucceeded, I will endeavour to deſcribe them as they occurred. ——

For many days after I had ſent my laſt letter to you, I continued a cloſe priſoner within my chamber. I was left to the mercy of a ſiſter, who dealt me pleaſure with a ſcanty hand. Whenever ſhe ſaw my ſpirits lower than uſual, ſhe exulted with the moſt reviling triumph, and that determined me to conceal my grief as much as poſſible. Mr. Danby, inſtead of being hurt by the ſorrow and oppreſſion he had brought upon me, ſeemed to join with my ſiſter in her envious triumph: frequently have they walked underneath my window,

dow, when the pleaſant breezes of the evening have ſucceeded the ſultry heats of day, laughing at me for my well choſen confinement. "It was time," ſaid Lucy, "for the pretty bird to be ſecured within a cage, or it had ſurely flown away with the demure, ſanctified Cornwall; but it ſhall have a mate when it has ſhaken off its ſulky humour." "Dear Miſs Tylney," cried the ſmiling wretch, "ſpare your cruel ſiſter." "Oh, I beg, Sir, you would *ſpare* your entreaties on *my* account. Miſs is extremely welcome to ſhew her wit, ſince it is at her own expence. I am above being wounded by ſuch low revenge. As to you, man, who have the art to hide beneath a gaudy dreſs, and fawning manners, a heart replete with every vice, I would prefer death in any ſhape, rather than a union with thee."—"Let us be gone, good Mr. Danby," cried Lucy, catching hold of his arm; "the girl looks and talks as if ſhe were going to act a Roman's part. Oh, theſe beauties have ſuch fine romantic notions. The man is to be pitied that has any thing to do with them. Believe me, *Brother Danby*, you

will have a hard taſk of it to ſubdue her ſtubborn ſpirit, and make her act and think like a reaſonable creature."—"With ſouls mean and baſe," ſaid I, "and I fear the private practiſers of vice, you are poorly but agreeably employed, in aggravating the ſorrows and failings of others; that, if poſſible, you may bring them to appear upon a level with yourſelves; you envy the happineſs you cannot know.—I have a pleaſure ſeated in my own breaſt which you cannot deprive me of—the pleaſure of having acted right." I cloſed the window, and left them to amuſe themſelves as they thought proper, retiring to the farther end of the room, and taking up a book which laid on a chair; but I had not ſat five minutes, before I was interrupted by my maid, Conſtance,—who had lived with me from my being five years old,—but who had been forced, on this change of affairs, to attend my ſiſter; whilſt a pert Abigail, who delighted to imitate the ill-becoming airs of her miſtreſs, poorly ſupplied her place. "Thank God," cried the faithful creature, "that I have at laſt found you, my dear young lady, alone. Oh! miſs

miſs Caroline, you cannot think how many hours I have grieved on your account; but things are coming round, and a fine diſcovery will ſoon be made—then ſome folks will know how to value other folks. I have ſuſpected it a long time." "What do you mean, Conſtance? You know I never allowed you to ſpeak diſreſpectfully of any one in this family." "Yes, yes, I know you have ever been too good for thoſe you had to deal with; but I ſay again, things are now coming round, it is what I have long wiſhed.—I hope you will permit me to ſpeak the truth, now your own happineſs is ſo much concerned in it." I bade her proceed; for indeed, Henrietta, my curioſity began to be prodigiouſly awakened. After carefully looking at the door, to ſee if any one liſtened to our diſcourſe, ſhe went on: ———

"You muſt know, miſs Caroline, that before we came to this houſe, I ſhrewdly ſuſpected that there was a more intimate acquaintance between Miſs Tylney and Mr. Danby than there ought to have been; but as I know you to be good and unſuſpicious, I did not ſay a word: howſome-

ever, the night after our coming here, I overheard a converſation that paſt between them, which confirmed my ſuſpicions.

" I own, I ſhould have liked Cornwall," ſaid your ſiſter, " better than any man I " know, for a huſband; becauſe I could " eaſily have impoſed on his fooliſh unſuſ- " pecting nature, and our acquaintance " might have continued. You muſt allow, " though, that I am mighty civil in taking " ſo much pains to procure you a wife;— " however, the promiſe you have made me " of giving into my poſſeſſion a part of " Caroline's fortune, and the delight of " triumphing over, and even rivalling that " proud beauty, who, from infancy, has " been the idol of her parents, and every " other heart, whilſt I have remained un- " noticed, ſlighted, and ſometimes almoſt " forgotten, have determined me to purſue " my point.—The proſpect too of making " that pedantick coxcomb ſuffer, who has " even dared to refuſe me, is another pre- " vailing motive." " Theſe were nearly " her words. Mr. Danby embraced her, " and by ſome words that followed, I heard " him appoint a place to meet her; I was

" determined

"determined to watch them, and after "the family were all in bed, as they "thought, I ſaw him go into her cham-"ber; and, a few mornings after, ſaw "him ſtealing from Miſs Tylney's—to his "own apartment.—Pardon me, Miſs Ca-"roline, for making old Jerry the partner "of my diſcoveries.—He has frequently "been a witneſs to the truth of what I tell "you, and the next time he ſees Mr. "Danby go into your ſiſter's room, is de-"termined to call my maſter and make "him a witneſs likewiſe.—I ſee you are "ſhocked," ſaid the good creature, "but, "indeed, Miſs Caroline, I have told you "only the truth."——

After deſiring her to conceal this diabo-lical affair as much as poſſible, and to im-poſe the ſame ſilence on Jerry, I diſmiſſed her, without endeavouring to counteract the ſcheme they had planned, thinking it quite right my father ſhould be acquainted with it, and not chooſing myſelf to be the meſſenger of ſuch ill tidings—Nor did I doubt but he would take every precaution to conceal his daughter's infamy from the world.—But, indeed, my Henrietta, this

additional proof of the depravity of my ſiſter's heart, with the certain knowledge of the extenſiveneſs of that malice, which ſhe ſo unjuſtly harboured againſt me, filled my boſom with regret and anguiſh. With what horror, too, did I reflect on that *wretch* with whom my miſtaken parents had taken ſo much pains, and even proceeded to ſuch unwarrantable lengths, to force me to be united.—Had they gently entreated—I had yielded, and been undone. What an abandoned hypocrite! Juſtly founded was my diſlike, which I could never conquer from the firſt hour he pretended to be my lover.

Adieu, my Henrietta. Without waiting for an anſwer, I ſhall proceed with my narrative the earlieſt opportunity.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER LI.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* BEAUFORT.

I SAW my ſiſter no more that evening, after the converſation mentioned in my laſt, which had paſt between Conſtance and myſelf. In the morning, as ſoon as it was light, I heard a moſt vioient buſtle in the adjoing apartments, and a ſcreaming as if ſome one was in fits.—I durſt not ring the bell to enquire the cauſe. About ſeven o'clock, my mother entered my chamber, and ſoftly opening the curtains to ſee if I was awake; I immediately roſe up in my bed, and with enquiring eyes, looked as if I wiſhed to know the cauſe that had procured me the uncommon favour of a viſit. "Oh! Caroline!" cried ſhe, burſting into tears, and throwing her arms around me, "your unhappy ſiſter has placed daggers in the hearts of her parents. Mr. Danby was"—"Spare the reſt, my dear madam," ſaid I, mixing my tears with hers, "I too well gueſs what you would add; my faithful Conſtance, laſt night,

night, told me the whole." "And can you weep, my dear injured girl," ſaid ſhe, "for the diſtreſs of thoſe who have ſo cruelly treated you? 'Tis a generoſity natural to my Caroline." "But what is to be done," cried I, "or how is this horrid ſtory to be concealed from the world?" "Mr. Danby," ſaid ſhe, "terrified at the ſudden and unexpected appearance of your father, has offered to make all the reſtitution in his power, by marrying his partner in iniquity, and they are this morning to be united. The diſagreeable face of affairs will admit of no delay. He is to give her ten thouſand pounds; and as ſoon as the ceremony is performed, they are to ſet off for Mr. Danby's country houſe. Your father, like me, is impatient to claſp you to his repenting, and again parental boſom; but will not requeſt you to come down ſtairs, till the deſigning, and, I fear, miſerable pair have left us. I muſt now leave you, my Caroline, to attend your humbled ſiſter; ſhe has, 'tis true, forgot the duty of a daughter, but I cannot forget that I am a mother." With tears, my poor diſtreſt parent left the room. Cruel,

as

as Lucy had ever been to me, I could not help lamenting her ſituation, and muſt have pitied the moſt depraved wretch living, that was doomed to ſpend her life with ſuch a man. — Not to keep you in ſuſpence, the next day they were married, and within two hours after the ceremony was performed, took their leave. They appeared diſcontented with each other; and Mr. Danby could not forbear giving ſeveral proofs of his diſſatisfaction and ill-humour as ſoon as he became a huſband. Fear alone compelled him to give his hand to Lucy. He once called me an angel—at the ſame inſtant giving his wife a look of contempt. My father and mother ſtrongly recommended to them to endeavour to be happy; gently hinted at their imprudence and injuſtice. Before Lucy left the houſe, ſhe begged leave to ſpeak a few words to my mother. When they had retired to another apartment, ſhe threw herſelf on her knees, confeſſed her guilt, begged my mother's forgiveneſs, and entreated that ſhe would intercede for her with me: Said, ſhe could not bear to take any leave of me. Soon after, a hired

chaiſe

chaiſe came to the door, and they departed.

As ſoon as they were gone, my father and mother hurried to my room; both eagerly embracing me, by turns, condeſcended to entreat I would pardon what had paſt, and even acknowledged the cruelty of parents in endeavouring to force their children to give their hands contrary to the wiſhes of their hearts. My father, with regret, mentioned the ſordidneſs and ambition which he had, for a long time, cheriſhed in his boſom, and thanked heaven for timely diſcovering his folly, ere he had ſold me to certain miſery. Unknown to me, a ſervant had been ſent to Mr. Cornwall to deſire his company in the afternoon. — When he arrived, he found the dear youth in a ſtate of the moſt painful diſtraction. The news had been carried to *****, that Miſs Tylney was that morning married to Mr. Danby; and as he had ſo long been known as my declared admirer, no one doubted but I was the happy bride. Poor Cornwall, who had, for many days, vainly attempted to ſee me, concluded that I had been compelled,

pelled, by force or ſtratagem, to give my hand to his rival.—By the miſery he endured—and the complaints he made, he diſcovered his paſſion to all around him. When the ſervant delivered his meſſage, and ſo agreeably undeceived him, with reſpect to the name of that ſiſter who had ſubmitted to wear the matrimonial fetters—(and heavy fetters I fear they indeed will prove) he was as much elevated by an extravagance of joy—as he, before, had been depreſt by ſorrow. On his arrival at our houſe, my father cheerfully bade him welcome, and with a delighted countenance introduced him to his Caroline. "You have both diſcovered ſuch penetration," ſaid the now good and tender parent, "in refuſing the perſon propoſed to you, though offered with ſuch conſiderable bribes, that I imagine your penetration is equally good in diſcovering merits and charms in each other; and I think it would be a pity, and even cruel, to part you—therefore, Mr. Cornwall, I here give you the hand of our beloved Caroline, with fifteen, inſtead of ten thouſand pounds, which I once offered you with a leſs deſerving

ſerving female, and as an atonement for the uneaſineſs I made you ſuffer." We threw ourſelves at his feet, and were raiſed with grateful fondneſs. — On obſerving that Mr. Cornwall looked pale and hurried, I begged to know the cauſe, and he gave me the above account: ſaid, his extreme, and unexpected happineſs would, for the preſent, prevent his ſpirits from being compoſed. — In the evening, thoſe two faithful ſervants, Conſtance and Jerry, were ſummoned into the parlour, and had each of them a handſome reward for their fidelity, and promiſed ſecrecy. To compleat the felicity of my maid, ſhe was again reinſtated in her place.

Mr. Cornwall, thus encouraged to hope every obſtacle was removed, that ſo lately appeared to impede his happineſs, ventured to ſolicit me, in the preſence of my father and mother, to fix an early day. I then, my Henrietta, unfolded to them the whole of your melancholy hiſtory: declared I could not think of becoming a bride till your affairs were in a happier train; ſaid, that I would wiſh to have every painful regret removed from my heart, that not

not one ſigh might overcloud that day on which I gave my hand to Mr. Cornwall, which could not be whilſt you were ſo diſtreſt. They admired your conduct, and ſhed tears at the repetition of your ſorrows, and acquieſced in my determination.

Thus ſtand affairs at preſent. Tell me you are happy, nor ſhall I feel the leſs pleaſure at that agreeable confeſſion, though my lover immediately claim my promiſed hand. I was in a good humour when I made that promiſe, to be ſure; however, I don't mean to retract it.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LET-

LETTER LII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

PERMIT me to return my Caroline the ſame congratulations which ſhe ſent to me, with every added wiſh for happineſs that her own heart can form.—Preſent them from me to your worthy lover. The coming from your lips, my ſweet friend, will make them of ſome value. I now my Caroline, with an heart at eaſe, and a boſom overflowing with gratitude to that bountiful Providence which has heaped ſuch unnumbered bleſſings on my drooping, and almoſt deſpairing head, can tell you, I am happy, even raiſed to that pitch of enviable felicity, that not one wiſh is left ungratified. My health is mended far beyond even the expectation of my anxious tender friends; for with ſuch only am I now ſurrounded. The meeting between Colonel Beaufort and your Henrietta was ſolemn, and tender beyond deſcription. The day before he arrived, a note was ſent to Mr. Aſhford, to inform him

him that Sir George Beaufort and his ſon would be with us the next afternoon by tea. Soon were the joyful tidings communicated to me, and my fond heart was thrown into the moſt agreeable agitation, but which, the weak ſtate of health I was in, would hardly ſupport. My cloaths had been ſent to me ſome days before, and I dreſſed myſelf, againſt his arrival, in white ſattin. Every moment of that day appeared lengthened to a month, till that happy one arrived which brought him to me. The inſtant the chaiſe ſtopt at the door, the little anger I had felt, for the unjuſt ſuſpicions he had harboured of me, ſubſided. With a graceful, and dejected air, he approached me, and kneeling at my feet:—"Can you forgive, and reſtore to favour, a guilty, but repenting huſband? Oh! Henrietta! much have I ſuffered for my folly, my almoſt unpardonable inſulting rage.—I might have known that an angelick guard would be near to protect your purity."—"Riſe, Oh! Riſe, my beloved Charles; your ſuſpicions were indeed cruel, unjuſt both to yourſelf and me; but indeed I harbour no reſent againſt you for them. Thus, kneeling

ing by your ſide, let me thank that benevolent Being who has at laſt ſo graciouſly reſtored you to my arms."—"I would not hinder your gentle triumph," cried Sir George, entering the room with my little Jeſſa in his arms, "but I have ſtill another valuable preſent to make my daughter." Another ſcene of luxuriant joy enſued. The child claſped her little arms around me, and conveyed an added tranſport to my heart.—Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford, with friendly *cruelty*, interrupted the ſcene of ſoft delight, by reminding me of my health, and adviſing me to ſubdue the violence of my emotions. The caution alarmed my Beaufort: he aroſe, and, with an agony of pity, and ſoftened love, looked with ſurpriſe and terror at ſeeing the alteration which grief had made in my once healthy countenance. At the ſame inſtant I was employed in the like agonizing manner. He looked pale and emaciated; one arm was in a ſling, and he ſeemed ſo weak he could hardly walk; but it was not ſo with our blooming Jeſſa! who looked the picture of health and eaſe, and ſoon began to entertain us with a Scotch dialect which often

often wanted an interpreter. — The next morning, Mr. Aſhford, at the requeſt of *Sir George*, once more joined our hands in the pariſh church; whilſt with his *he* preſented me to his ſon. At our return he gave him a writing, which inſured him an income of twelve hundred pounds per annum, out of which he deſired a handſome ſettlement might be made on me. This, with what his commiſſion brings in, will enable us to live in a very genteel manner.

To add to our happineſs and pleaſure, we have happened of a handſome houſe within two miles of Mr. Aſhford's, which Sir George has purchaſed for his ſon, and has agreed to live with us, whenever he chuſes to reſide in this part of the world. My huſband has likewiſe uſed his utmoſt endeavours to reconcile his father to his brother and ſiſter, and has ſo far ſucceeded, that he has promiſed to write to Harry, and give him an invitation to return; and likewiſe as ſoon as we are ſettled, to go down into Derbyſhire, and free his daughter from her diſagreeable captivity. She is then to be my viſitor for as long a time

as

as I pleaſe. Colonel Beaufort ſpeaks very highly of his ſiſter; ſays, ſhe was once of a moſt amiable diſpoſition; but her mother dying when ſhe was very young--ſhe was, unhappily, always left to the power of ſtrangers—the miſtreſſes of boarding ſchools ſeldom attend to any other than external accompliſhments; therefore, for want of proper inſtructions being early inſtilled into her young mind, ſhe was gay and thoughtleſs; who can wonder at her indiſcreet connection?—Miſtreſs of a pretty perſon, expoſed to the flattery of the men, the proſpect of having a large fortune, and often driven to ſeek pleaſures abroad, by the ſtrangeneſs of her father's temper; ſhe is much to be pitied, and I am impatient to embrace, and endeavour to render her more happy.——

Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford ſhare in our felicity; already they are become fond of my little Jeſſa.—Never will it be in our power to acknowledge enough the obligations which they have conferred; as the beſt of parents I ſhall ever regard them, and it is a conſiderable addition to my happineſs, that I ſhall live within ſo ſhort a diſtance from

from them. We have received congratulations from many families in the neighbourhood, on our happy reunion; with wiſhes, that no diſagreeable occurrence may ever intervene to part us more.

Colonel Beaufort has been over, accompanied by his father, to our former habitation; Sir George greatly admired the pleaſantneſs of its ſituation. At his return, laughed at us, for the indulgence it once afforded our romantic loves. They would have had me accompany them; but I begged to be excuſed. The old woman who had been left by Sir Henry Courtney, was ſtill there. The Colonel rewarded her for her honeſt care. After paying the rent, giving warning to leave it, and likewiſe giving directions for the packing up, and ſending the furniture to us, he took his leave, with reluctance he ſaid, of that ſpot where he had ſpent ſo many happy hours. Our new habitation will be ready in four months. We have agreed to ſtay with Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford till our healths are more perfectly re-eſtabliſhed: then we are to accompany Sir George to London, and remain at his houſe till our own is ready; in which time

time I am to be introduced to Miſs Beaufort.

Mr. Freeland declares that *Love* is a doctor that works miracles--that his art excells that of any ſon of Eſculapius.—A few weeks ago, he declares, that he deſpaired of my life. I am now too lively, he ſays, to be *very* ill, and he doubts not but in a few weeks I ſhall be perfectly reſtored to health. The Colonel too is finely, and has recovered his former healthy and pleaſing looks.—

I think Jeſſa is not ſo happy at this time as her mother; for notwithſtanding my careſſes, thoſe of her father, grandfather, and other friends, ſhe frequently weeps, and calls for her nurſe: it is a proof of her kind treatment of my child, during my abſence from her. I have ſent her a handſome preſent for her care and humanity; but as ſhe once deceived me, and had even received a bribe to betray my innocence, can never think of ſeeing her more: thoſe tender attachments, though at firſt deeply impreſt on the minds of children, ſoon wear off.

The

The length of this letter, my Caroline, is a ſure proof of my returning health. I thank you for the very kind compliment you paid me, in deferring to complete your own happineſs, whilſt mine remained in a ſtate of uncertainty; but indeed, my friend, you ought not to have made a compliment at ſo great an expence to the man you love:—it was enough to make him diſlike me.—Now every obſtacle is removed, I hope you will ſoon reward his patient acquieſcence with your requeſt.

I cannot cloſe this letter without mentioning your unhappy ſiſter, for ſuch I think we may venture to pronounce her. Can we imagine a more miſerable ſituation, than for a woman to be married to one who muſt deſpiſe, and have the meaneſt opinion of her? even a man, whom ſhe herſelf deſpiſes. Is it not natural for ſuch a man to ſuſpect that the woman, who could give up her innocence to gratify her revenge and avarice, would ſcruple to err again, whenever ſhe met with one more agreeable than himſelf?—On the contrary, your ſiſter knows that ſhe was not the object of Mr. Danby's love, and conſequently

her thoughts will ſoon fix on one that ſhe thinks is ſo. Thus, ſuſpicion, that dire enemy of love, is unavoidably planted on both ſides, whilſt diſſatisfaction will introduce diſguſt.—I pity, as much as I deſpiſe them, Caroline—Fear and ſhame are two great reſtraints upon mankind: they are deeply rooted too in almoſt every heart; but with this pair they had no influence. How fortunate was your eſcape from both!—

Write ſoon; but remember I do not expect your letter to be ſigned with the name of Tylney.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

Miſs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* BEAUFORT.

NEXT Tueſday fortnight is fixt on for the day in which I am to give my hand to Mr. Cornwall. The lawyers, who, you know, my friend, are, in general, mighty ſlow with their pieces of parchment, occaſion this delay: but I ſhall have but little reaſon to regret it, if you will kindly conſent to favour me with your company on that day. — My father and mother deſire me to preſent their entreaties, with mine, to Sir George Beaufort, the Colonel, Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford, and beg they would eſcort you hither. They can have no excuſe for denying this requeſt; therefore, I will not liſten to a refuſal. My mother is very deſirous of ſeeing you, which ſhe has not done for ſeveral years before you became a wife; but think, my Henrietta, how great my impatience is for that delightful pleaſure. Think too, how much it will add to my happineſs to have the dear friend of my heart with me at

ſuch a time, and let *that* generouſly induce you not to refuſe me. The apartments are already preparing againſt you arrive. —I was once ſo happy as to be a favourite with colonel Beaufort, and hope he will kindly ſtand my friend on this occaſion.— The journey, and change of air, will be of infinite ſervice to you, and I will take great care of you whilſt here.

We lately received a letter from my unhappy, imprudent ſiſter, which has thrown a damp upon our hearts. She ſends word, that ſhe is as completely miſerable as ſhe deſerves to be: that Mr. Danby has taken to drinking; and, when diſguiſed with liquor, treats her with the moſt ſavage cruelty. He will not allow her to ſee any company, and denies her every indulgence which her preſent ſituation ſo much requires. She concludes her letter with ſaying ſhe deſerves the miſery which ſhe feels, and even condeſcends to aſk my forgiveneſs, which my mother has aſſured her of—When I am become the wife of Mr. Cornwall, my father intends going over, and endeavouring to ſoften matters between them.—He may ſucceed for a time;

time; but where people wantonly give up their beſt friend, a mind at peace with itſelf, little hopes are there of ſecuring them happineſs by our moſt friendly endeavours. There are reflections, too, much more cutting than even thoſe which bring to our remembrance what one *has*, or *might have* been — eſpecially if our own miſconduct has brought about the miſerable change.— Such is the caſe with Lucy.—

Mr. Cornwall continues to be all that the heart of Caroline can wiſh. He is likewiſe ſuch a favourite with my parents, that they regret his abſence, if but for a few hours. Already has he rivalled me in their affections; but he has gained the conqueſt by ways that have done himſelf honour, and given me the higheſt pleaſure.—Already has his converſation, and the nobleneſs of his ſentiments, made ſuch an impreſſion on the mind of my father, that it ſeems to have altered his very nature; he is become kind and conſiderate to his domeſtics; nor can he now bring himſelf to affront diſtreſs with that inſulting air of ſuperiority and power as once he did. — My mother, by regaining her

former influence over his heart, is reſtored to that placid ſweetneſs of temper, which, whilſt it convinces us of the goodneſs of the mind, I ever think does honour to human nature.

Come then, my Henrietta, and be a witneſs to our felicity, which 'tis in your power ſtill to encreaſe. Let your Jeſſa be of the party; though ſhe is the laſt invited, ſhe won't be the leſs welcome.—As I have not a lawful right to the name of Cornwall, you muſt, for this once, permit me to ſign that of

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LET-

LETTER LIV.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

YOUR invitation was ſuch, my Caroline, as could not be refuſed.—I ſhall be with you in a few days; Sir George and colonel Beaufort will be my eſcort. Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford were much pleaſed with your genteel and friendly invitation, which they cannot think of accepting; but hope, at ſome future period, to be introduced to you. Jeſſa is to remain with them during our viſit to you, and our excurſion to London. It would be cruel, they ſaid, to rob them of all their company at once.—You will be delighted, I am ſure, at being a witneſs to the encreaſing tenderneſs of my huſband; and at a time, too, when ſickneſs, grief, and deſpair have ſo plainly played the thief with the little beauty which I once poſſeſſed, and ſo often make me a lifeleſs companion, a tireſome complainer. Often does he reproach himſelf for the only action which ever gave me juſt reaſon to complain of

him; but which, circumſtances candidly conſidered, could hardly be deemed a fault, as the cauſe was in itſelf an excuſe. Appearances were certainly againſt me. Gone, no one could tell where — An injurious report, which carried with it all the appearance of truth, told by every tongue. — No wonder that diſappointed love and friendſhip excited ſuch rage within his boſom — for, how terrible is that evil which comes cloaked under ſuch enchanting maſks? Even now I tremble when I recollect the ſtern front of my dear, and then cruel Charles. Imagination will ſometimes be employing herſelf in bringing to review diſagreeable, as well as paſt pleaſing occurrences: However, I hope never to ſee that brow again deformed with paſſion, on which ſerenity ſits ſo graceful. May you, with your worthy Cornwall, for many ſucceeding years experience the ſoft, the generous intercourſe of united hearts, and the pleaſures of mutual love.

Adieu, my Caroline. I expect to pay you a viſit almoſt as ſoon as this letter.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER LV.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

WITH what different and pleaſing ſenſations do I now take up my pen to addreſs my worthy friend, compared to thoſe which I experienced a few weeks ſince, when ſuch a mob of horrid paſſions almoſt deprived me of my reaſon, of which jealouſy, revenge, and diſappointed love, ſtood foremoſt. With ſuch companions a man has no chance for peace. How ſweet, how pleaſing the reverſe! Every flying moment now bears the ſignature of happineſs reſtored. Returning health again has bleſt me, by placing the roſes on my Henrietta's cheek. My wounds ſtill continue troubleſome; but my health is perfectly re-eſtabliſhed. Were it poſſible, I would give you a deſcription of my meeting with my Henrietta, and convey to you an idea of the ten thouſand beauties which, at that happy moment, played around her. She had dreſt herſelf in white ſattin, the very ſame which ſhe met me in, a few years ſince, to plight our vows. Like

its angel wearer, it retained all its native ſpotleſs purity, and like her, ſeemed to have acquired additional beauty by its long concealment. I had prepared myſelf to receive ſome gentle reproaches for my more than ſavage cruelty; but ſhe was all herſelf; not one wounding word eſcaped her lips. The indiſpoſition which ſhe ſo long had ſuffered, had thrown, a not unpleaſing languor over her once lively animated countenance. She was much thinner; but even from ſickneſs ſhe could borrow charms. Nothing could ſurpaſs the elegance, the gentility of her appearance. My father, — who, a few weeks ſince, confeſſed himſelf her admirer,—and ſo far conquered his pride of family and love of money, as to make her an offer of his hand,—at ſight of thoſe charms, which received additional advantage from the aſſiſtance of dreſs, was ſtruck with ſurprize. Hardly would ſhe permit me to make an acknowlegment for my fault, before ſhe claſpt her ſnowy arms around me, with the ſame eagerneſs as ſhe had done when I ſo baſely ſpurned the kneeling beauty from me.—When her child was preſented

preſented to her by Sir George, all the mother appeared within her countenance. —Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford deſerve a better pen than mine to do juſtice to the real goodneſs of their characters. To ſum up all in few words—they are poſſeſſed of every virtue.—In all their actions unwearied charity appears—a beneyolence founded on principle—to which is added a cheerful ſerene, and evenneſs of temper, that is ſurpriſing.—Without being ever branded with practiſing any guilt or folly themſelves, they are ever ready to find excuſes for the failings of others; and at a time of life when ſo many, by their fretfulneſs and ill-humour, drive even their neareſt relations from them, their acquaintance are uneaſy to think they refuſe to mix with ſociety; but they thought it time, they ſaid, to withdraw from the world, and make that a matter of choice, which the infirmities of old age would ſoon render it neceſſary for them to comply with; and, another motive was, they did not like to burthen their indulgent friends with their company, when it muſt be attended with greater pain than pleaſure.

Mr.

Mr. Aſhford ſtill converſes with the wiſdom of a Mentor: from his mouth, ſuch are the charms of religion and an eaſy piety, ſuch the power of truth and eloquence, that even guilt might be pleaſed to hear itſelf condemned. He recommends to every one to taſte the innocent amuſements, and partake, with moderation, the enjoyments of life. "The many bleſſings which our Maker has given," ſays he, "were given to be enjoyed; and 'tis we, ourſelves, alone, who deſtroy their end and deſign by an immoderate uſe of them." Providence has indulged them with an eaſy fortune, which, as they have no ſuperfluous, luxurious wants to ſupply, is not only a bleſſing to themſelves, but to many others. Their habitation is ſituated in the pleaſanteſt manner imaginable; every thing within it, ſimple, neat and elegant; the neighbourhood around is genteel and numerous. All theſe circumſtances combined, have determined me, and my Henrietta, to fix our reſidence in this part of the world; and, accordingly, we have purchaſed a houſe, which will be ready for our reception within a few months, and to which

which place my heart, as well as tongue, will bid you welcome. However, I ſhall have an opportunity of introducing you to my lovely wife in a few weeks, as we intend making a ſhort ſtay with my father in London.

Adieu, Stanmore; I muſt throw aſide my pen to obey a ſummons from my Henrietta; the meſſenger no other than my Jeſſa.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Mrs.* ASHFORD.

WITH joy we ſet down to comply with the requeſt of thoſe we love--as by ſo doing, we confer a pleaſure on ourſelves—My Caroline yeſterday plighted her vows with thoſe of the beſt of men,—whoſe happineſs, at receiving ſo ineſtimable a treaſure, was pictured on his animated countenance. Her parents attended the ceremony, and cheerfully reſigned their Caroline to the arms of Mr. Cornwall. — Never did I ſee the friend of my heart look ſo ſtrikingly lovely. She was dreſt in a muſlin negligee, with coloured ſprigs, of her own working. — Every other part of her dreſs was white. The genteel elegance of Mr. Cornwall's perſon wants not the aſſiſtance of dreſs.--The happy union of this young and amiable pair ſpreads a general

neral joy throughout the village: Nothing but mirth and feſtivity appeared. Mr. Tylney might be ſaid to keep open houſe on the occaſion; for all who came were welcomed with the utmoſt hoſpitality; the pleaſure which every one ſhews at the confirmation of their happineſs — is a ſure proof of the goodneſs of their hearts. — And although my Caroline is poſſeſſed of ſo many accompliſhments, yet ſhe has no enemy to repine becauſe ſhe is raiſed to felicity. How differently was that day ſpent, on which Miſs Tylney gave her hand to Mr. Danby, and of which I gave you an account. The contraſt is as great as that between the two ſiſters. We have received ſeveral accounts of their encreaſing unhappineſs: Next week Mr. Tylney propoſes ſetting off to pay them a viſit, and, if poſſible, reconcile or ſoften matters between the unworthy pair. At the united requeſt of our friends, we have agreed to ſtay here till the venerable, and now good parent returns. My Caroline, with a generoſity and tenderneſs peculiar to herſelf, laments the fate of her unworthy ſuffering

ſiſter—

ſiſter—and mourns becauſe ſhe cannot alleviate her ſorrows.

Mr. Cornwall, with a livelineſs, and even a flow of ſpirits, has a ſenſibility of ſoul that bleeds for every one's diſtreſs; and ſhe has that delightful benevolence joined with it, that leaves no probable means untried to ſoften the woes which ſhe regrets, of which her long tried, and never failing friendſhip to your Henrietta, when burthened with almoſt unequal hardſhips, was a proof. The world might condemn and vilify—but Caroline Tylney would not ſuſpect or forſake her friend. How much did her ſoothing talents, her gentle tenderneſs ſoften the cruel hand of misfortune! Her happineſs now redoubles mine, and adds new charms to my Beaufort's return.

Adieu, my dear Madam; I am called upon by the happy bride to go with her in purſuit of our lords and maſters, who are fiſhing in a canal at the bottom of the garden. As I leave you to go on ſuch a pleaſing errand, I know you will excuſe me. Say every thing for me to Mr. Aſh-

ford

ford that will be acceptable and render me more dear. To more than you can ſay my heart with gratitude aſſents; and I muſt ever remain, with duty, love, reſpect and veneration, yours,

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER LVII.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

YOU will be ſurprized at ſeeing this letter dated *****, as you no doubt expected to ſee me in London ere now. We have been here near a month; but at firſt intended ſtaying here only a few days: ſhall ſet off to-morrow for Mr. Aſhford's, and within a week, from thence to London, accompanied by a Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall,—whoſe nuptials we came here to celebrate. Mrs. Cornwall, late Miſs Tylney, has been from infancy the beloved, faithful, and ſympathizing friend of my Henrietta—in perſon and mind nearly her equal. Her match with Mr. Cornwall was an union of love, not intereſt; and happineſs will, in all probability, reward the generous fair one, who has made a moſt judicious choice. Cornwall is a young clergyman, whoſe exemplary life has already brought honour upon himſelf and his profeſſion—his manners are plain,

plain, ſimple and eaſy, his perſon graceful and pleaſing, his behaviour chearful, his converſation entertaining; he has ſeen but little of the world, but politeneſs ſeems natural to him; he has an honeſt open ſoul. His Caroline, who is a moſt lovely, lively woman, has, in his eyes, all the graces of her ſex. With chearful voices they regiſtered their vows to heaven; and nature, in forming them, ſeemed to have formed their tempers and their hearts alike. — Each lovely friend would have thought her happineſs incomplete, had not her ſiſter excellence ſhared an equal felicity. To deſcribe the manner in which we ſpend our time, and the romantic pleaſures we enjoy, when rambling with our fair ones o'er the flowery carpets, which at this delightful ſeaſon, the bountiful hand of nature ſo profuſely has ſpread around, would poſſibly, in your opinion, be to tell you we were the ſtupideſt animals breathing; but which affords an almoſt equal pleaſure to my father, and Mr. and Mrs. Tylney. — You people of conſequence, Stanmore, who are engaged in a continual buſtle with the great world, and condemn yourſelves

yourſelves to walk in the thorny road of ambition, — hear nothing of murmuring ſtreams, flowery meadows, and pleaſing groves, any more than if they had no exiſtence but in the head of a poet; but my heart receives an additional ſoftneſs— and the trueſt pleaſure amidſt theſe ſcenes. —When I embrace my Henrietta, I am ready to exclaim, Let victory and glory crown the brave—my victory is here.—

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LET-

LETTER LVIII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Mrs.* ASHFORD.

WE ſhall return to you, my dear madam, within a few days, and I have the pleaſure to inform you that we ſhall be accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall, who are impatient to be reckoned amongſt the number of your friends. My Caroline, who ſo chearfully (as I informed you in my laſt) vowed obedience, ſeems as chearfully inclined to practiſe it, and every returning day appears to bring with it an encreaſe of happineſs. Amply am I now rewarded for all the ſorrows which I had to encounter. But I will not court diſappointment by encouraging hopes

hopes, that ſuch uninterrupted felicity as I now enjoy, can long be mine.—Though accompanied by my Beaufort, though each revolving hour generally preſents me with ſome new proof of his increaſing love; I ſhall pay a viſit to the metropolis with reluctance. The buſy ſcenes of that buſtling place I never liked:—the ſweet ſerenity of the country ſuits me much better; nor can the approach of winter make me view it with any kind of terror. Who, my dear madam, would prefer the vanity and vices of a court, to the ſweet and peaceful contentment of a rural life? In the charming retreat which is preparing for our reception, I hope to paſs the evening of my days; and in endeavouring to copy the amiable example of you and Mr. Aſhford, chearfully prepare for that life which is ſo much ſuperior to this.—But even this ſtrange world, my Beaufort's never dying love has rendered all delightful—and every woe is huſhed to peace.

Embrace my daughter for me—remember us all in the moſt reſpectful manner to my

my venerable benefactor, my more than parent: whilſt Henrietta lives, ſhe muſt be gratefully and affectionately your's,

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

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